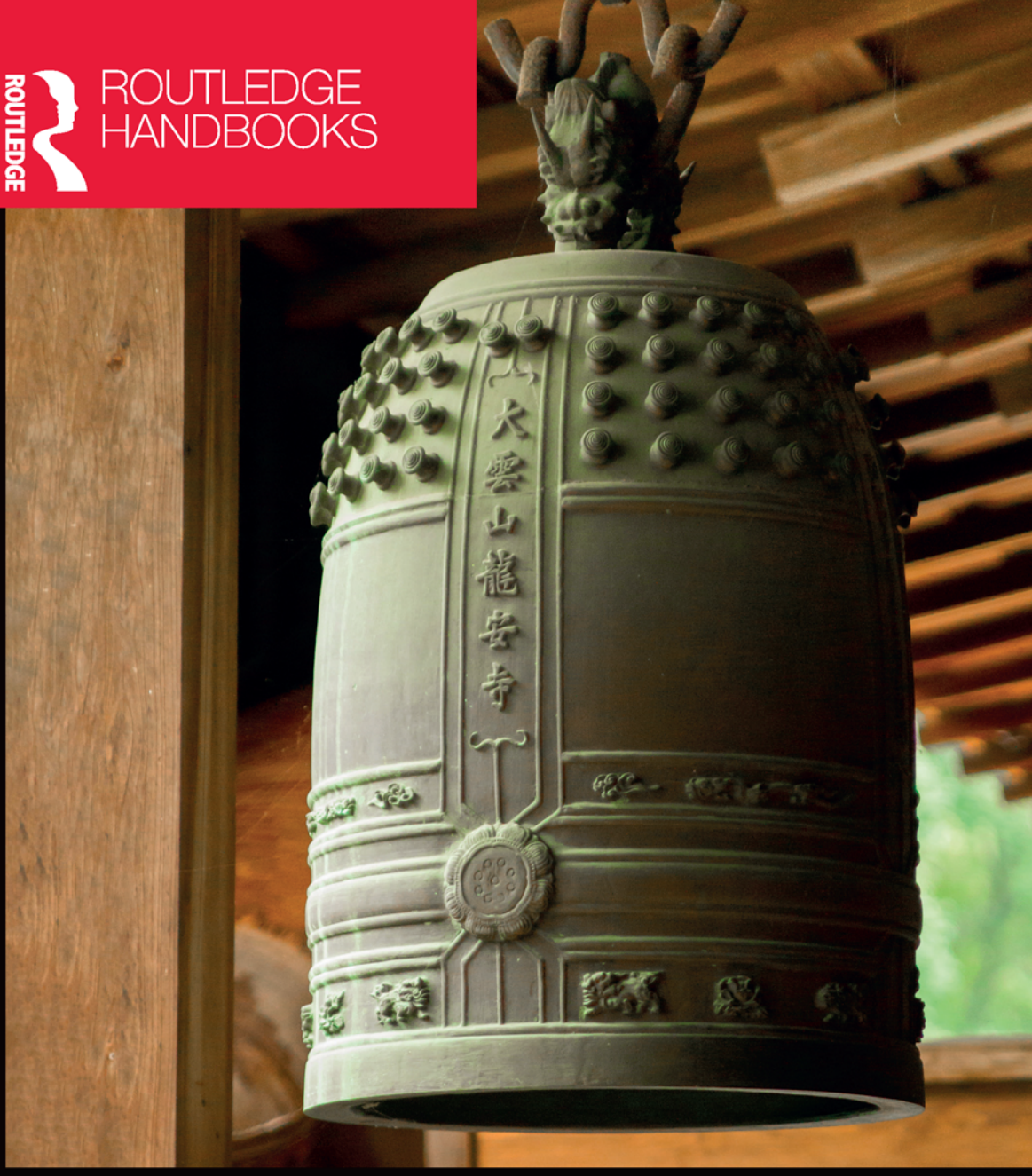
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Routledge Handbook of Premodern Japanese History

Edited by Karl F. Friday

Routledge Handbook of Premodern Japanese History

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Karl F. Friday is Professor in the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Saitama University and Professor Emeritus at the University of Georgia, USA.



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Edited by Karl F. Friday

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Contributors

Mikael S. Adolphson received his PhD from Stanford University and is currently the Keidanren Professor of Japanese Studies at the University of Cambridge. He is the author of *The Gates of Power: Monks, Courtiers and Warriors in Premodern Japan* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2000) and *The Teeth and Claws of the Buddha: Monastic Warriors and* Sōhei *in Japanese History* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2007). He is also the co-editor of *Heian Japan, Centers and Peripheries* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2007) with Edward Kamens and Stacie Matsumoto and of *Lovable Losers: The Heike in Action and Memory* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2015) with Anne Commons.

Bruce L. Batten (PhD, Stanford University, 1989) is Dean of the College of Global Communication at J.F. Oberlin University in Tokyo and Resident Director of the Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies in Yokohama. He is a specialist on ancient and medieval Japan and is the author of *To the Ends of Japan: Premodern Frontiers, Boundaries, and Interactions* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2003) and *Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War and Peace, 500–1300* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), as well as the co-editor (with Philip C. Brown) of *Environment and Society in the Japanese Islands: From Prehistory to the Present* (Oregon State University Press, 2015). His current research interest is climate change in Japanese history.

Joshua Batts is a doctoral candidate and Mellon Interdisciplinary Fellow at Columbia University, where he is completing a dissertation in Premodern Japanese History. His dissertation project examines the development and decline of relations between the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1868) and Habsburg Spain (1516–1700) in the early seventeenth century. His work integrates Japanese and world history, as well as the commercial and diplomatic history of East Asia and the Pacific World.

Mikaël Bauer is currently Assistant Professor of Japanese Religions in the Department of Religious Studies at McGill University. He studied Buddhism at Osaka Gaidai and Ōtani University between 2002 and 2005 and graduated from Harvard University's Department of East Asian Studies in 2011. He took up his position at McGill in 2016 after having been Lecturer in Japanese Studies at the University of Leeds for five years. He focuses on the relation between Buddhism and institutional developments from the Nara to the Heian period. He has published on the history of Kōfukuji and its main ritual, the Yuima-e, in the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* and on the conflation of imperial and monastic lineages in *Monumenta Nipponica*. Currently he is working on a monograph on the institutional and doctrinal history of Kōfukuji, in addition to a study on the life and work of the eighth-century courtier Fujiwara no Nakamaro.

Kristina Buhrman received her PhD from the Department of History at the University of Southern California. Since 2013, she has been an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion at Florida State University, teaching Japanese religions. Her research focus is the social history of knowledge in Heian and Kamakura Japan, centering on the intersection of religion and science.

Lee Butler is an independent scholar of late medieval and early modern Japan. His early work centered on the place of Japan's imperial court during the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, and resulted in the monograph *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan, 1467–1680: Resilience and Renewal* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), among other studies. He has also published on late medieval linguistics ("Language Change and 'Proper' Transliterations in Premodern Japanese") and Edo period material culture ("Patronage and the Building Arts in Tokugawa Japan"). At present, his research is focused on the local history of Japan's Izumi Province during the opening years of the sixteenth century, drawing upon Kujō Masamoto's diary of 1501–1504 as his main source.

William E. Deal holds a joint appointment in Cognitive Science and Religious Studies at Case Western Reserve University. He is Severance Professor of the History of Religion in the Department of Religious Studies and Professor of Cognitive Science, and Chair, of the Department of Cognitive Science. Deal teaches courses that focus on theory and interpretation in the academic study of religion, the cognitive science of religion and ethics, comparative religious ethics, and East Asian religious and ethical traditions. His scholarship includes numerous articles, chapters, and book reviews on methodology in the academic study of religion, religion and ethics, and Japanese Buddhism. He is co-author of *Theory for Religious Studies* (Routledge, 2004) and *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism* (Wiley Blackwell, 2015) and author of *Handbook to Life in Medieval and Early Modern Japan* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

David Eason is Associate Professor in the College of Foreign Studies at Kansai Gaidai University. His main area of research concerns late medieval and early modern legal and cultural history with a focus on conflict and dispute resolution. He received his Doctorate in History from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2009. He has been a regular participant in a series of recent workshops and conferences organized around the theme of "Japan's Long Sixteenth Century" and is currently at work on a larger study that examines the interplay between legal codes, violence, and emotional rhetoric in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Japan.

William Wayne Farris is Professor Emeritus from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, where he held the Sen Sôshitsu XV Distinguished Chair in the History and Culture of Traditional Japan for twelve years. His research has focused primarily on the social and economic history of Japan before 1600 and includes six books, notably *Japan's Medieval Population: Famine, Fertility, and Warfare in a Transformative Age* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), a Choice Outstanding Academic Title. His current research traces the history of Japanese tea from its origins in the late 700s until the present, examining how the cultivar was farmed, exchanged, and received into Japanese society. He currently resides in Cape Town, South Africa.

Karl F. Friday (PhD, Stanford University, 1989) is Professor in the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Saitama University and Professor Emeritus at the University of Georgia. A specialist in the Heian and Kamakura periods, his publications include *Hired Swords: The Rise of Private Warrior Power in Early Japan* (Stanford University Press, 1992), *Legacies of the Sword: The Kashima Shinryu & Samurai Martial Culture* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1997),

Samurai, Warfare and the State in Early Medieval Japan (Routledge, 2004), *The First Samurai: The Life & Legend of the Warrior Rebel Taira Masakado* (Wiley, 2008), *Japan Emerging: Premodern History to 1850* (Westview, 2012), and numerous shorter works.

Fujita Hirotsugu completed the doctoral program at Kyoto University in 1983. A specialist in Geography and Geographical Education, he is currently Professor in the Graduate School of Humanities and Faculty of Letters at Kobe University, and the Principal of Kobe University Secondary School. His major publications include *Sōen ezu ga gataru kodai chūsei* (Yamakawa, 2009), "Historical Geography in Japan since 1980" (*Japanese Journal of Human Geography*, 2013), and "Chirigaku kara mita tōshiteki na ba: kaiga shiryō ni 'tōshi' keikan o saguru" (*Tōshiteki na ba: chūsei toshi kenkyū*, 2012).

Douglas S. Fuqua is an independent scholar specializing in premodern Japan and currently conducting research in Germany. He received his MA in Archaeology from Meiji University where he studied Yayoi and Kofun cultures under Otsuka Hatsushige, and his PhD in History from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa (2004) where he studied under H. Paul Varley. His doctoral dissertation was "The Japanese Missions to Tang China and Maritime Exchange in East Asia, 7th–9th Centuries."

Suzanne Gay is Professor Emerita of East Asian Studies and History at Oberlin College. Her works include *The Moneylenders of Late Medieval Kyoto* and several articles on medieval commercial groups and individuals in the Kyoto area. She is also the co-author of *A Brief History of Japanese Civilization* with Conrad Schirokauer and David Lurie (Wadsworth, 2012).

Janet R. Goodwin is a research associate affiliated with the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Southern California. She was a founding faculty member of the University of Aizu in Aizu-Wakamatsu, Japan. Her publications include *Alms and Vagabonds: Buddhist Temples and Popular Patronage in Medieval Japan* (University of Hawai'i Press, 1994) and *Selling Songs and Smiles: The Sex Trade in Heian and Kamakura Japan* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2007). She is the editor, together with Joan R. Piggott, of *Land, Power, and the Sacred: The Estate System in Medieval Japan*, forthcoming from University of Hawai'i Press.

Ijūin Yōko (PhD, Senshū University, 2012) is Adjunct Lecturer at Senshū University. A specialist in the history of women and gender, her publications include *Kodai no josei kanryō* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2014) and *Nihon kodai jokan no kenkyū* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2016).

Simon Kaner (MA Cantab, PhD, 2004) is Director of the Centre for Japanese Studies at the University of East Anglia and Head of the Centre for Archaeology and Heritage at the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures. He is an archaeologist specializing in the prehistory of Japan. A Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, he has taught and published on many aspects of East Asian and European archaeology. He has undertaken archaeological research in Japan, the UK, and elsewhere and worked for several years in archaeological heritage management in the UK. His major publications include *An Illustrated Companion to Japanese Archaeology* (with Werner Steinhaus, Archaeopress, 2016) and *The Power of Dogu: Ceramic Figures from Ancient Japan* (2009), which accompanied a major exhibition at the British Museum. Other works include *Jomon Reflections: Forager Life and Culture in the Prehistoric Japanese Archipelago* by Tatsuo Kobayashi (2005), which he adapted and edited with Oki Nakamura. He is co-editor of the *Japanese Journal of Archaeology* (www.jjarchaeology.jp) and Research Fellow in the Japanese Section of the British Museum.

Sachiko Kawai (PhD, University of Southern California, 2015) specializes in premodern Japanese history, focusing on women, their landholdings, and gender power relations in the medieval period (*c.*1100–1600). She attended the University of Southern California (USC) where she earned an MA in East Asian Languages and Cultures, and conducted dissertation research at the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo with the support of a Japan Foundation Fellowship. After receiving her PhD in History and a Graduate Certificate in Gender Studies at USC, she taught graduate and undergraduate courses in the East Asian Languages and Civilizations Department at Harvard University as a postdoctoral fellow. She is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard's Reischauer Institute, where she is completing her book manuscript, *Uncertain Powers: Female Royals as Landlords in Early Medieval Japan, 1100–1300*.

Kawai Yasushi received his PhD from Kobe University in 1994. A specialist in medieval Japanese history, he is currently Professor in the Graduate School at Osaka University. His publications include *Genpei kassen no kyozō o hagu* (Kōdansha, 1996), *Kamakura bakufu seiritsushi no kenkyū* (Azekura shobō, 2004), and *Genpei no nairan to kōbu seiken* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2009).

Jeffrey Yoshio Kurashige (PhD, Harvard University, 2011) is Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Business and Commerce at Keio University. Prior to assuming this permanent post, he taught at Kyushu University in their Graduate School of Humanities. His research focuses on the economic and social history of the sixteenth century, but his interests span into the field of modern finance due to his prior career as an investment banker. He is currently developing his dissertation into a book-length study entitled *Serving Your Master: The Kashindan Retainer Corps and the Socio-Economic Transformation of Warring States Japan*.

Mikami Yoshitaka completed his doctorate in 1998 at the University of Tokyo Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology. Currently serving as Associate Professor at the National Museum of Japanese History, he has also been a Lecturer at Yamagata Prefectural Yonezawa Women's Junior College, and Associate Professor in the Faculty of Literature and Social Sciences at Yamagata University. His publications include *Nihon kodai no kahei to shakai* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2005), *Jr. Nihon no rekishi 2: miyako to chihō no kurashi*, *Nara jidai kara Heian jidai* (co-authored, with Fujimori Kentarō, Shōgakkan, 2010), *Nihon kodai no bungaku to chihō shakai* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2013), and *Rakugaki ni rekishi o yomu* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2014).

Joan R. Piggott is Gordon L. MacDonald Professor of History and Director of the Project for Premodern Japan Studies, a graduate program at the University of Southern California. She is the author of *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship* (Stanford University Press, 1997), editor of *Capital and Countryside in Japan 300–1180* (East Asia Program, Cornell University, 2006), and co-editor of *The Dictionary of Sources of Classical Japan* (online publication, 2006) and *Teishinkōki: The Year 939 in the Journal of Regent Fujiwara no Tadahira* (East Asia Program, Cornell University, 2008). A volume of selections from the *Chūyūki* journal of Fujiwara no Munetada concerning the birth of Toba Tennō is in press, as is another co-edited volume: *Land, Power, and Ritual: The Estate System in Medieval Japan*.

Kristopher L. Reeves is currently doing research for his doctoral dissertation (Columbia University) while working as Assistant Professor of Japanese Literature at the National Institute of Japanese Literature in Tokyo. His current research focuses on Sinitic poetry (*kanshi*) produced during the Heian period, especially the complex and changing relationships between patronage and anthologization.

Brian Ruppert, PhD (Princeton), Hirasawa Professor of Japanese Studies and Chair of the Asian Studies Program at Bates College, is author of *Jewel in the Ashes: Buddha Relics and Power* (Harvard University Asia Center, Harvard University Press, 2000), and co-author recently of *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015). He is also author of "Buddhism in Japan" (*Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), "Buddhism and Law in Japan" (in *Buddhism and Law*, Cambridge University Press, 2014), and other publications on premodern Japanese religions in English and Japanese, including "Medieval Buddhisms" in the forthcoming *Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 1: Premodern Japan* (Cambridge University Press). He is currently completing book manuscripts respectively on the development of scripture (*shōgyō*) and on indebtedness in premodern Japanese Buddhism.

Sakaue Yasutoshi is Professor in the Graduate School of Humanities at Kyushu University. He attended the University of Tokyo, graduating from the Faculty of Letters, and then received his master's degree from the Graduate School of Humanities at the same institution. He has served as a graduate assistant of the Faculty of Letters at the University of Tokyo (1983–1985) and, since 1985, as Lecturer, Assistant Professor, and Professor at Kyushu University. His research focuses on the origins and development of the *ritsuryō* state and the transition to the medieval polity, primarily from an institutional perspective. More concretely, his work highlights the legacies of Chinese law, and the tensions between written law and customary practice as the cornerstones of the classical Japanese bureaucracy and revenue-collection systems. His publications include *Tōryō shūihō* (co-edited, Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1997), *Nihon no rekishi 5: ritsuryō kokka no tankan to "Nihon"* (Kōdansha, 2001; reprinted Kōdansha gakujutsu bunkō, 2009), *Shiriizu Nihon kodaishi 4: Heijō-kyō no jidai* (Iwanami shinsho, 2011), *Nihon kodai no rekishi 5: sekkan seiji to chihō shakai* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2015), and numerous shorter works.

Ken'ichi Sasaki is Professor of Archaeology, Faculty of Arts and Letters, Meiji University, Tokyo. He received a PhD in Anthropology from Harvard University in 1995. His major research interest is the archaeology of state-formation in Japan from eastern peripheral perspectives. Since he was hired at Meiji, he has been conducting fieldworks in the southern Ibaraki Prefecture (old province of Hitachi). His major publications include *Shinano omuro tsumi'ishizuka kofun-gun no kenkyu* ("A Study of the Omuro Carin and Earthen Mound Group in the Old Province of Shinano," Rokuichi shobō, 1995), *Kofun kara jiin he* ("Change in the Elite Symbolism from the Mound Construction to Buddhist Temples in Seventh Century Eastern Japan," Rokuichi shobō, 2013), and *Hitachi no kofun-gun* ("Kofun Period Mound Groups in the Old Province of Hitachi," Rokuichi shobō, 2010).

Peter D. Shapinsky is Associate Professor of History at the University of Illinois, Springfield. A specialist in medieval Japan and its maritime history, he is the author of *Lords of the Sea: Pirates, Violence, and Commerce in Late Medieval Japan* (University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 2014), and numerous shorter works.

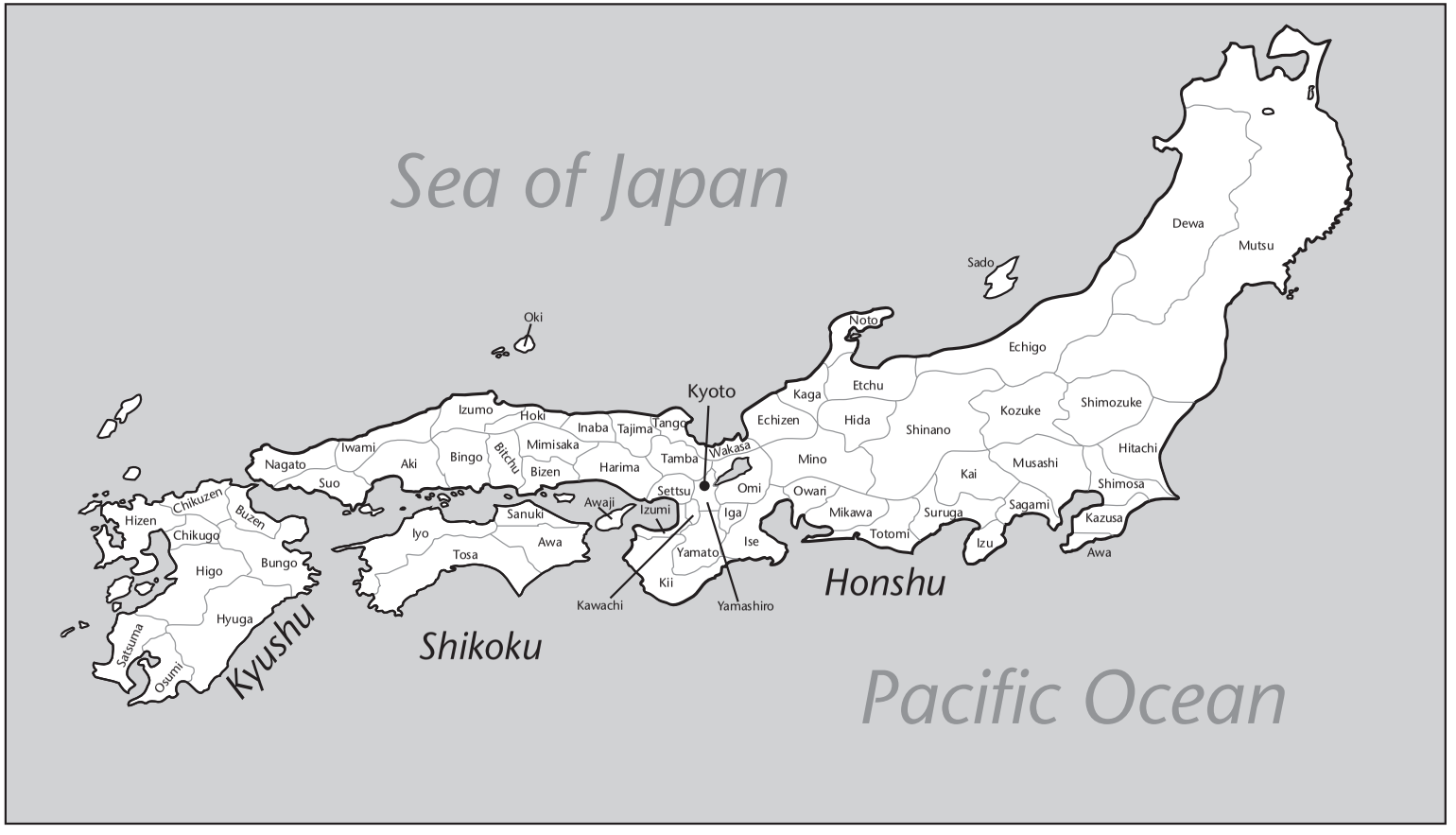
Pierre F. Souyri (PhD, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, 1984) is Professor of History at Geneva University. A former Director of Maison Franco-Japonaise in Tokyo and co-editor of *Annales (Histoire, Sciences Sociales)* and *Cipango, Cahiers d'études japonaises*, he is a specialist on medieval Japan, the formation of the social sciences in modern Japan, and the history of political thought in Japan. His publications include *The World Turned Upside Down: Medieval Japanese Society* (Columbia University Press, 2001), *Nouvelle Histoire du Japon* (Perrin, 2010), *History at Stake in East Asia* (Cafoscarina, 2012), *Japon colonial 1880–1930, Les voix de la dissension*

(Les Belles-Lettres, 2014), *Samouraï, 1000 ans d'histoire* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, éditions Château des Ducs de Bretagne, 2014), *Kamikazes* (co-authored with Constance Sereni; Flammarion, 2015), *Moderne sans être occidental, Aux origines du Japon d'aujourd'hui* (Gallimard, 2016), and numerous shorter works.

Detlev Taranczewski (Dr.phil. in Japanese Studies [1982, University of Frankfurt am Main]; *venia legendi* in Japanese Studies [2002, Bonn University]). He studied at the University of Frankfurt am Main, Tokyo Metropolitan University, and Waseda University. He has also conducted research at the Historiographical Institute (University of Tokyo) and at Seikei University. His main fields of research are medieval Japan, paddy field irrigation, historical cartography, and the history of history in Japan. His research includes studies of Nitta no shō and the local rule of the Nitta family in the Kamakura era, the formation of local self-government in medieval Japan through the process of conflict and cooperation in paddy-field irrigation, recent and historical access to water resources, and reproduction of elites by delegation and differentiation of royal *Herrschaft* in medieval Japan.

Hitomi Tonomura is a member of the Department of History and Women's Studies Program at the University of Michigan. Her current areas of study are war and violence, commerce and merchants, and gender and sexuality. Her next book will examine the construction of military manhood in battle-prone society of late medieval Japan. Her publications include *Community and Commerce in Late Medieval Japan: The Corporate Villages of Tokuchin-ho* (Stanford University Press, 1992) and *Women and Class in Japanese History* (University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 1999), as well as numerous articles pertaining to gendered relations and their representations in premodern Japanese society and culture.

Charlotte von Verschuer is Professor of Japanese History at Ecole Pratiques des Hautes Etudes. Her research focuses on material culture, agriculture, and international trade. Her publications in English include: *Across the Perilous Sea: Japanese Trade with China and Korea from the Seventh to Sixteenth Centuries* (Cornell University Press, 2006), and *Rice, Agriculture, and the Food Supply in Premodern Japan*, translated and edited by Wendy Cobcroft (Routledge, 2016). She also co-edited *Dictionary of Sources of Classical Japan* (Diffusion De Boccard, 2006).



Map Japan in the tenth century

Source: Map entitled "Japan in the Tenth Century," in Karl Friday, *The First Samurai: The Life and Legend of the Warrior Rebel, Taira Masakado* (New York: Wiley, 2008), p. xii.

Introduction

Karl F. Friday

History changes. And indeed, if it did not, there would be little point to historical research, for most historians would be doing scarcely more than collecting and organizing tidbits of information—and perhaps, very occasionally, discovering new bits in hitherto unknown archives and adding them to the pile. This is the sort of endeavor that Robin Collingwood dismissed as "scissors-and-paste history," but it is most assuredly not what historians actually do with their time.[1] The resulting stark contrast between The Past itself, which must be immutable, and historians' decidedly mutable accounting of it seems puzzling at first blush; and has long served as fodder for wit, ranging from Franklin P. Jones' observation that, "Perhaps nobody has changed the course of history as much as the historians," to Pogo Possum's (Walt Kelly's sage-resident of Okefenokee Swamp), lament that "The past ain't what it used to be."

But in truth there is no puzzle here. All history is a reconstruction of the past, one that is finite and incomplete, circumscribed by both the capacity and the intent of its builders. And all history is, as Carl Becker put it, "not part of the external world, but an imaginative reconstruction of vanished events," assembled to enrich a society's understanding of itself, and always with an eye toward the needs of the present. "It is," Becker reminds us,

> for this reason that the history of history is a record of the "new history" that every age rises to confound and supplant the old … every generation, our own included, must inevitably, understand the past and anticipate the future in light of its own restricted experience.[2]

The essays that compose this volume summarize the history of attempts to reconstruct premodern Japan, defined here as the era before 1600. The decision to end the book's coverage with the sixteenth century reflects prevailing conventions within the profession, which divide Japanese history into either three major epochs (premodern, early modern, and modern) or two (premodern and modern), with the break at or around 1600. This, in turn, echoes dominant trends in scholarship, which emphasize the role of seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and early nineteenth-century socio-economic developments—rather than thoroughgoing national reinvention in the Western image—in shaping late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Japan. That is, most historians today consider the Tokugawa period (1600–1868) to be more appropriately approached as a preface to the modern age, than as a postscript to the medieval era.[3]

"Premodern Japan" is, of course, like all historical period labels, an invented construct that historians deploy for referential (and analytical) convenience. It is, to be sure, a somewhat problematic construct. For one thing, "premodern" constitutes a definition in the negative, labeling the epoch for what it is *not*, rather than for some affirmative characteristic. And for another, the term hints at a teleological view of history, a progression toward the modern, and consequently, perhaps, a connection to "modernization theory" and the modernization paradigms of Max Weber and Talcott Parsons.[4] But both objections can, upon closer inspection, be recognized mainly as hypercriticism. In the end, they raise a challenge to identify an appropriate alternative label that decades of conference panels, editorial discussions, and professional conversations have thus far been unable to meet, except with more awkward expressions, like "Japan before 1600." "Premodern," in the sense in which it is employed in this volume, and within the field at large, is best understood as an anodyne, entirely temporal in connotation.

By the same token, "premodern Japan" embraces a very long span of time—ten or more centuries during which change featured at least as prominently as continuity. Useful explanation, and meaningful analysis, therefore demand subdivision of this diffuse epoch. Historians have, accordingly, devised a number of overlapping systems through which to conceptualize "Japan before 1600."[5]

The best-known periodization schema sorts the premodern age into eras defined by the (nominal) geographic seat of power. Although there is variation among the sub-fields of history, and scholars frequently debate the precise boundaries of some periods, by and large, this conceptualization identifies eight major epochs, with some overlap between a few. Thus the Asuka (or more commonly in the West, the Yamato) period, beginning in the sixth century and lasting until the turn of the eighth, was followed by the Nara period (710–794), the Heian period (794–1185), the Kamakura period (1185–1333), the Muromachi period (1333–1568), and the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568–1600). The late fourteenth to late sixteenth centuries are also frequently divided into the Nanbokuchō (1336–1392) and Sengoku (1477–1573) periods.

But while readily familiar to scholarly and general audiences alike, and therefore useful for short-hand references, these systems are not without foibles. Most importantly, many of the key cultural, social, economic, and political changes that interest historians did not coincide neatly with shifts in the location of the capital, or even with changes of leadership. Historians, therefore, also identify broad, thematic epochs.

For much of the postwar era, historians in Japan have broken premodern history into three such periods: the *genshi* ("primordial") age, lasting until the late fifth or early sixth century, the *kodai* ("ancient" or "antiquity") age, spanning the sixth through the twelfth centuries, and the *chūsei* ("medieval") age, running from the late twelfth until the late sixteenth centuries.[6] While this schema was originally derived from Marxist models classifying historical periods in terms of modes of production, the labels have become standard in Japan, even among historians who otherwise reject Marxist analyses. Historians in the West have also by-and-large adopted this system, albeit not without inconsistencies of translation and other problems.

Of the three ages posited by this schema, *chūsei* poses the fewest difficulties for either adoption or translation. Indeed, both the term and the construct originated, at the dawn of the twentieth century, as appropriations from European history.[7] And while *chūsei* was originally borrowed as an analogy, with an eye toward mapping Japanese onto Western and world history, it remains apposite to Japan's past considered entirely in its own right—that is, as a label for an age of snowballing socio-political upheaval bookended by the relative stability, and the relatively centralized orders, of the classical and early modern eras. "Medieval" therefore seems a reasonably unproblematic English sobriquet for the period. Nevertheless, as it is commonly applied—to the long span of time from the late twelfth to the late sixteenth centuries—"the medieval age" encompasses a great deal of

history. For this reason, it has become common practice to subdivide it into at least two parts: an early medieval period, during which the institutions of the classical age remained prominent, and a late medieval period, during which they very nearly faded into insignificance.

The term *genshi*, and the question of where to distinguish it from the *kodai* era (and why), presents thornier issues. The literal meaning of *genshi* (written with characters meaning "origin" and "begin") corresponds fairly closely to the English terms "primordial," "primeval," "inaugural," or "initiatory"; but all of these seem ludicrous in application to an epoch that extends into the first four or five centuries of the CE/AD era. Some authors have used "prehistoric" or "protohistoric" as labels for the era.[8] But in addition to being teleological (as is, in fact, *genshi* itself), these terms are essentially meaningless, now that the historical profession has long since abandoned the time-worn distinction between the pre- and post-documentary past.[9] "Ancient" offers another possibility, but this term has become problematically ambiguous because of its history of usage—a point to which I will return in a moment. The best solution may be the term "archaic," which has also gained some currency among historians.[10]

Kodai represents a similarly difficult construct. To begin with, its standard application is far too broad, spanning at least the sixth to the twelfth centuries, and sometimes stretching backward to include the fifth, or forward to include the thirteenth centuries. As such, "*kodai*" subsumes both the early state-formation era and the first five or six centuries following the establishment of the sinified imperial (*ritsuryō*) state. It seems conceptually appropriate—indeed, I would argue *essential*—to distinguish the socio-political structure(s) of the late seventh to twelfth centuries from those of earlier times, as most historians writing in recent decades have, in fact, done.

Anglophone historians usually label this later epoch as either "ancient" or "classical." The latter, however, has much to recommend it over the former. In addition to being (as noted above) ambiguously applied to both the fifth to early seventh centuries *and* the seventh to twelfth centuries, "ancient" also carries negative connotations. It is primarily a chronological term; but outside the Japanese context it is usually applied to the extremely remote past, and to raise impressions of eras long-dead and worthy only of antiquarian interest. "Classical," on the other hand, is role-attributive, and far more positive in nuance—one need only compare the images brought forth by the phrases "Classical Greece" and "Ancient Rome" to verify this. More specifically, "classical" identifies the foundational nature of the seventh to twelfth centuries in Japan's developmental history, the era during which the quintessential, enduring elements of subsequent Japanese civilization—the Chinese-style monarchy, the *ritsuryō* legal structure, the court-centered hierarchy of status and authority, the network of provinces and districts, the religious system, and numerous other features—were put into place.[11]

This volume, then, employs both the capital-appellative periodization schema (Nara, Heian, Kamakura, etc.) and a somewhat refined version of the broad theme-denominative terminology discussed in the foregoing paragraphs: an Archaic era lasting until the mid-seventh century; a Classical epoch from the mid-seventh to the late twelfth century; an Early Medieval period during the thirteenth to early fifteenth centuries; and a Late Medieval period of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—followed by an Early Modern period from the end of the sixteenth to the late nineteenth century.

In one sense, the study of premodern Japan is as old as the subject itself. The first historical chronicles, the *Kojiki* ("Record of Ancient Matters") and the *Nihon shoki* ("Chronicle of Japan"), were produced in the late seventh century, followed by a sequence of court-sponsored histories in the tradition of Chinese dynastic chronicles—*Shoku Nihongi* ("Continued Chronicle of Japan"), *Nihon kōki* ("Later Chronicle of Japan"), *Shoku Nihon kōki* ("Continued Later Chronicle of Japan"),

Nihon Montoku tennō jitsuroku ("Veritable Records of Emperor Montoku"), and *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* ("Veritable Records of Three Reigns").[12] The first "privately produced" histories were literary works cast in imitation of the official chronicles—*Eiga monogatari* ("Tales of Splendor"), *Ōkagami* ("Great Mirror"), *Imakagami* ("New Mirror"), *Mizukagami* ("Water Mirror"), *Azuma kagami* ("Mirror of the East"), and *Masukagami* ("Enhanced Mirror")—and wartales, including *Shōmonki* ("Tale of Masakado"), *Mutsu waki* ("Account of Mutsu"), *Ōshū gosannenki* ("Chronicle of the Latter Three Years' War"), *Heike monogatari* ("Tale of the Heike"), and *Genpei jōsuiki* ("Account of the Rise and Fall of the Minamoto and Taira").[13] Interpretive histories, written by individuals, arguably began with Jien's *Gukanshō* ("Excerpts by a Foolish Official"), which appeared in the early thirteenth century, and Kitabatake Chikafusa's fourteenth-century *Jinnō shōtōki* ("Record of the True Lineages of Divinities and Sovereigns"), followed by the work of Motoori Norinaga and other *kokugaku* ("national studies") scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[14]

But modern research on Japanese history began in the late nineteenth century, pioneered by Nakada Kaoru, Hara Katsurō, Hoshino Hisashi, Miura Hiroyuki, Kiraizumi Kiyoshi, Kume Kunitake, Watanabe Yosuke, Ryō Susumu, Nishioka Toranosuke and others. These Meiji—(1868–1912) and Taishō—(1912–1926) era historians were heavily influenced by the "scientific" perspective advocated by Leopold von Ranke and the German positivists, and by issues revolving around Japan's search for its place in the world, vis-à-vis the rest of Asia and the Western powers. Much of their work was dominated by comparisons and constructs—such as feudalism—drawn from European history. From the 1920s, Marxist models became influential, as historians debated over how to fit Japan's past into Marx's framework of Slave, Feudal, and Capitalist stages through which all developing societies pass.

During the 1930s, historical research in Japan was progressively circumscribed by the government's increasingly strident nationalism. But these shackles came off with the end of the Pacific War, and historians found themselves newly free to question even the most basic premises of the received wisdom. Postwar scholarship on premodern Japan has been dominated—and sharply divided—by two groups: Marxist-Socialist historians led by Ishimoda Shō, Matsumoto Shinpachirō, and (in more recent decades) Amino Yoshihiko; and a positivist, or empirical, school led by Satō Shin'ichi, Nagahara Keiji, Kuroda Toshio, and Takeuchi Rizō. Both groups set their sights on recovering a history centered on the interplay of central with local power, and of the agency of elites with that of the rank and file.

Western scholarship on premodern Japan has a much shorter history, and until just a few decades ago suffered from an appreciable gap in methodological sophistication. The earliest work was Englebert Kaempfer's *Das Heutige Japan*, published posthumously (and in English translation) in 1727, as *The History of Japan*. Based principally on the author's first-hand observations and information otherwise collected during his two-year sojourn in Japan in the 1690s, Kaempfer's study, along with French, Dutch, and German versions thereof subsequently produced, remained Western readers' sole window into the archipelago for more than two centuries, when it was at last joined by Walter Dening's *The Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi*, James Murdoch's three-volume *A History of Japan*, and a handful of other works.[15]

Dening's and Murdoch's accounts were principally collections and compilations of legends. The real Anglophone pioneers of historical scholarship on premodern Japan were Asakawa Kan'ichi and Robert Karl Reischauer in the prewar era; and George Sansom, Delmer Brown, Minoru Shinoda, and Paul Varley in the 1950s and 1960s. With the exception of Asakawa, who was in many respects a man ahead of his time, these scholars based their work primarily on chronicles and other narrative sources, and on amalgamation of studies published in Japanese. But this approach changed, and Western scholarship on premodern Japan came of age, in the late 1960s

and 1970s, when John W. Hall, Jeffrey Mass, G. Cameron Hurst, Francine Hérail, Elizabeth Sato, Carl Steenstrup, Prescott Wintersteen, Martin Collcutt, Michael Solomon, Kenneth Grossberg and others at last began to integrate the full range of source materials available to historians—documents, court records, diaries, legal codes, archeological findings, and artwork, as well as chronicles, narrative sources, and secondary scholarship in both Japanese, English, and (albeit less systematically or comprehensively) other languages.

In the decades since, scholarship on premodern Japanese history has broadened, deepened, and expanded exponentially. In both Japan and the West an unprecedented number of specialists have entered the field. Collectively, their work is marked by a shift in focus from the history of elites to a broader examination of social structures and their intersection with political, economic, institutional, and cultural evolution; a shift in methodology from dependence on literary and narrative sources to incorporation of documentary sources, physical evidence of the past and analysis guided by theoretical constructs borrowed from the social sciences; and a fundamental reassessment of nearly all the key tenets of what was once the received wisdom.

Prior to the 1960s, visions of premodern Japan—particularly the English-language literature—described a historical landscape littered with failed regimes and radical breaks with what had gone before, in a narrative dominated by themes of usurpation: An emergent tribal confederation was reformed—very nearly at a stroke, in the wake of a spectacular coup d'état in 645—into a centralized imperial regime slavishly copied from Tang China. But this overly ambitious attempt to force Japanese square pegs into Chinese round holes was doomed from the start. Within decades of their inception, organs and procedures were abandoned and, bit by bit, the authority of the imperial throne that underlay the system became buffered by layers ("screens and curtains" in the words of George Sansom) and usurped.[16] Real power passed from reigning emperors to Fujiwara regents, and then to retired sovereigns, after which the court itself was slowly pushed aside. Warriors assumed control of first the countryside and then, with the establishment of the Kamakura shogunate in the 1180s, of the country as a whole, marking the demise of the classical age and the onset of a medieval, "feudal" world. And the pattern continued, as shoguns ruling in the name of emperors themselves became figureheads for Hōjō regents. Attempts to restore the past, first in the form of Emperor Go-Daigo's quixotic and ill-fated "Kenmu Restoration" (1333–1336) and then in the form of a new shogunate under Ashikaga Takauji and his heirs, only hastened the pace of change, as warlords in the countryside gobbled up real power, first ruling in the name of shoguns who ruled in the name of emperors, but later all-but sovereign in their own right, in positions that owed to little beyond raw military might. And then, just as the archipelago was dissolving into utter chaos, three brilliant leaders—Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616)—emerged in sequence, restoring national order, albeit at the expense of progress. The Tokugawa, the ultimate victors in this opera, stabilized the new order and their place in it by freezing society, stifling change, and hermetically sealing Japan off from contact with the outside world.

As Jeffrey Mass observed, "part and parcel of this way of thinking was a search for the institutionally new … 'change' seemed more compelling than 'survival'."[17] This perspective owed in large part to myopic engrossment with analogy to European history and faith in literary and other narrative sources. But it began to break down rapidly in the 1970s, as historians became more sophisticated in methodology, more attentive to approaching premodern Japan on its own terms, less infatuated with the role of "great men," and more skeptical of hoary archetypes. The shift began with John W. Hall's focus on the resilience of old patterns, and continued under the generation of historians who came of age in the 1970s and their emphasis on the survival of older institutions, mindsets, and practices alongside new developments. By the dawn of the twenty-first century, the

field had become dominated by a paradigm of mostly incremental—albeit sometimes sudden and dramatic—innovation within enduring fundamental patterns. The image of decline and failure has been superseded by one of resilience and innovation within prescribed limitations.

Robin Collingwood famously observed that "every present has a past of its own, and … every generation must rewrite history in its own way."[18] This volume, then, is directed at current and future historians. It is designed and intended not as a high-level textbook or introduction to premodern Japanese history (or various topics thereon), but as a platform for future research—a basecamp and a reconnoiter of ground covered thus far.

The volume features essays by leading historians on twenty-five topics critical to contemporary research interests and agendas, presented in four thematic Parts: "Geography and the Environment," "Political Events and Institutions," "Society and Culture," and "Economy and Technology." As is inevitably the case in anthologies of this sort, decisions about topical coverage were guided in part by the interests and priorities of individual authors, and further shaped by contributor attrition in the late stages of the project. And while the approaches taken by individual authors vary considerably, each aims at equipping scholars seeking to conduct research on these various subjects with a firm, foundational grasp of what historians are doing, what they have done, and how. The challenge taken up by each contributor was to construct historiographic surveys in the broadest sense, incorporating summaries of what has been written about each topic and when, but going beyond that to discuss larger epistemological issues, including available sources, the evolution of research methodologies, important debates among scholars in the field, limits on what can be gleaned from known sources and methodologies, and key questions that need yet to be explored.

Notes

1 Robin Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 249–280.
2 Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian," 233, 234–235.
3 The Tokugawa period, which lies, for the most part, outside the scope of this volume, is also known as the Edo period.
4 For an overview of modernization theory and critiques thereof, see Dean C. Tipps, "Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of National Societies: A Critical Perspective."
5 These issues are discussed in more detail in Karl F. Friday, "Sorting the Past."
6 The *genshi* era is commonly divided into three overlapping archeological epochs: the Jōmon (beginning around 14,000 BCE), Yayoi (from around 900 BCE), and Kofun (beginning around 250 CE) ages.
7 For more on the construct of medievalism and the medieval, see Thomas Kierstead, "Medieval Japan: Taking the Middle Ages Outside Europe"; and Andrew Edmund Goble, "Defining 'Medieval'."
8 See, for example, Gina Barnes, *Protohistoric Yamato: Archaeology of the First Japanese State*; Yūji Mizoguchi, "Affinities of the Protohistoric Kofun People of Japan with Pre- and Proto-Historic Asian Populations"; or Joan R. Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*.
9 See, for example, Conrad Totman, *Japan Before Perry: A Short History* or Mikiso Hane, *Premodern Japan: A Historical Survey*.
10 See, for example, Cornelius J. Kiley, "The Role of the Queen in the Archaic Japanese Dynasty," or "State and Dynasty in Archaic Yamato"; Meryll Dean, *Japanese Legal System*; Bradley Smith, *Japan: A History in Art*; or Noritake Tsuda, *A History of Japanese Art: From Prehistory to the Taisho Period*. The term "archaic" is, to be sure, no less loaded with antiquarian connotations and implications than "ancient." It does, however, avoid the confusion that otherwise results from the dual identity of "ancient" in the English-language literature—that is, the fact that "ancient" has been used in some studies to describe the period before the *ritsuryō* era, and in others to refer to the Nara and Heian periods, and *not* what came before. There is, in fact, a rather extensive literature on the notion of "archaic states." Among the most important studies here are Gary M. Feinman and Joyce Marcus, *Archaic States*; and Norman Yoffee, *Myths of the Archaic State: Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States, and Civilizations*.

11 Joan R. Piggott, "Defining 'Ancient' and 'Classical'." At the same time, the political and economic structures of the seventh to twelfth centuries were hardly of an unwavering piece. By the tenth century, governance and land-holding practices had evolved a considerable bit away from the letter—and even the spirit—of the Chinese-inspired legal codes, although they still remained well within the framework of the court-centered imperial state. For this reason, most specialists also break the classical era into imperial state (*ritsuryō*) and oligarchic (*ōchō kokka* or *kenmon taisei*) phases, lasting from the mid-600s until the late 800s, and from the mid-ninth through the mid-fourteenth century, respectively. For details, see Chapters 6 and 7 of this volume.

12 The court histories are examined at length in Sakamoto Tarō, *The Six National Histories of Japan*. English translations of these texts include: Basil Hall Chamberlain, trans., *Kojiki, or Records of Ancient Matters*; Donald Philippi, *Kojiki*; Gustave Heldt, *Kojiki: An Account of Ancient Matters*; W.G. Aston, *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to 697 AD*; Ross Bender, *Nara Japan, 749–757: A Translation from Shoku Nihongi*; Bender, *Nara Japan, 758–763: A Translation from Shoku Nihongi*; Bender, *Nara Japan, 767–770: A Translation from Shoku Nihongi*; Bender, *The Edicts of the Last Empress, 749–770: A Translation from Shoku Nihongi*; and Shimizu Osamu, "Nihon Montoku Tenno Jitsuroku: An Annotated Translation, with a Survey of the Early Ninth Century."

13 Important English studies and translations include: William and Helen C. McCullough, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Japanese Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period;* Joseph K. Yamagiwa, *The Ōkagami: A Japanese Historical Tale*; Giuliana Stramigioli, "Masakadoki"; Judith N. Rabinovitch, *Shomonki: The Story of Masakado's Rebellion*; Helen McCullough, "A Tale of Mutsu"; Helen McCullough, *The Tale of the Heike*; Kitagawa Hiroshi and Bruce Tsuchida, *The Tale of the Heike*; and Royall Tyler, *The Tale of the Heike*. The historiography of the wartales is discussed in detail by H. Paul Varley, in *Warriors of Japan as Portrayed in the War Tales*.

14 Delmer Brown and Ishida Ichirō, *The Future and the Past: A Translation and Study of the Gukansho, an Interpretive History of Japan Written in 1219*; H. Paul Varley, *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns*. On *kokugaku*, see Joyce Ackroyd, *Lessons from History: Arai Hakuseki's Tokushi Yoron*; Harry Harootunian, *Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism*; Mark McNally, *Proving the Way: Conflict and Practice in the History of Japanese Nativism*; Peter Nosco, *Remembering Paradise: Nativism and Nostalgia in Eighteenth Century Japan*; and Michael Wachutka, *Kokugaku in Meiji-period Japan: The Modern Transformation of 'National Learning' and the Formation of Scholarly Societies*.

15 The full (English) title of Kaempfer's study was, *The History of Japan Together with a Description of the Kingdom of Siam 1690–92*. Beatrice Bodart-Bailey's retranslation of the original manuscript, *Kaempfer's Japan: Tokugawa Culture Observed*, is the most accessible version of the text. Dening's study appeared in 1888, while Murdoch's was published sequentially between 1910 and 1926.

16 George Sansom, *Japan: A Short Cultural History*, 300.

17 Jeffrey P. Mass, "Changing Western Views of Kamakura History," 179.

18 Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 247–248.

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Part I

Geography and the environment



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1
Geography in history and history in geography

Fujita Hirotsugu, translated by David Eason

Historical geography is an area of study likely to be unfamiliar to many readers. As the name suggests, this field focuses on the relationship between geographic and historical phenomena. While it scarcely seems necessary to elaborate at length upon the simple correspondence of either geography with space or history with time, switching those pairings—pondering the relationship of geography to time or history to space—significantly changes our perspective.

The march of time is an inherently dispassionate process, whereas history is formed from the particular impressions of individuals. It is, for example, an immutable law of nature that, in the span of a single minute, a given object will free-fall a fixed distance, regardless of its mass. On the other hand, in the course of these same sixty seconds, events of major import may occur or, depending on the people and places involved, the interval may flit by without anyone taking notice. It is this latter passage of time inexorably tied to the idiosyncrasies of human experience and perception that is expressed as "history."

Furthermore, in the same way that history stands in stark relief to the disinterested march of time, so too do the terms "geography," "region," and "landscape" each emphasize the particularities of place in opposition to that otherwise amorphous conceptual container known as "space." Indeed, it can be said that the academic study of geography serves to problematize precisely this point—in truth geography is a rather odd character among the academic disciplines. At the same time, however, historical geography serves as the field of inquiry in which historical phenomena are subjected to geographic scrutiny.

In the field of historical geography, the flow of time receives top billing, while space is relegated to an ancillary development. Perhaps the most fitting concepts in geography with which to represent space are either "region" or "landscape," although in historical geography "landscape" is by far the more important term. Nevertheless, historical geography is, in the final analysis, a branch of the larger field of geography. And as a key term in geographical studies, "landscape" is defined as "any portion of a larger surface that, as a unit of space bearing distinctive properties borne from its relative position, can be distinguished and separated out from the unshared characteristics of its surroundings."[1]

Landscapes of this sort, or rather composed of these features, are diverse and range from landforms and other natural phenomena to quintessentially human elements like buildings. In the field of geography, the distribution of such objects is represented on maps, from which further

insights are then derived. Likewise, maps also serve as a vital medium of expression when research results are explained. The landscapes that are taken up in the study of geography are historically constructed and exist right before our eyes. Historical geography addresses this issue of historical presence.

What is historical geography?

While there are numerous ways to conceptualize historical geography, all can be broadly divided into three categories. The first involves the reconstruction of landscapes and their divisions at given points (or periods) in time. The foundation for this sort of work consists of locating the landscapes and place names that appear in historical documents, and identifying them with modern places. Next, the historical landscape is reconstructed as such identifications accumulate and are added to maps. And finally, these map reconstructions become the jumping-off point for geographic analyses.

It is often possible to search maps for place names appearing in historical sources. For this level of work, the internet has become increasingly useful and convenient. It is also possible to search for place names designating small-scale territorial units on the cadastral maps of agricultural lands created during the early Meiji (1868–1912) period. Such cadastral maps were produced as appendices to land registers for property taxes. Accordingly, they record the address, classification (residential, paddy field, dry field, vacant land, forest, pond, etc.), owner, area and the like of each property unit; and, for comparison with land registers, they designate the boundaries of each section.[2]

Of particular importance here with respect to landscape is the fact that it is possible to identify villages and settlements, which appear on the cadastral maps as aggregates of units designated as residential properties. There are cases in which properties that were dry fields when the first cadastral charts were created in the early Meiji era have since become residential areas; and it is possible to ascertain the point in time at which this change occurred, through cross-referencing with land registers. Looking in the other direction of time, there are cases in which lands that were dry fields in the early Meiji period had been residential areas in earlier times—such as during the Edo period (1600–1868). This can be confirmed by local surveys of the parcels, noting, for example, vestiges of earlier buildings or elevated plots that must have once been the foundations of houses.[3] The importance of this sort of on-site investigation to historical geography shows its affinity to the parent field of geography—and its fundamental difference from historical research based on written texts.

Through comparison of sequential map reconstructions of landscapes at particular points in time, it is possible to analyze geographic changes between the periods in question. Such investigation of geographic change represents the second way to define "historical geography." In any event, it should be clear that maps are held in high regard by historical geographers. An example of this perspective very close to home for me, is the heavy use of historical maps as instructional aids in World History and Japanese History courses at high schools as part of students' education in "the history of geography."

Geographic research esteems various sorts of statistical analysis of populations by geographic units. The advance of computer technology in recent years has become a major force supporting such efforts. The Geographic Information System (GIS) utilized in automobile navigation systems offers one example of what is possible here. GIS is a system that expresses information compiled in databases in map form (or, more strictly, as data on latitude and longitude). Facilities (such as convenience stores and gas stations) along the route on which the automobile is traveling can be instantly searched for and displayed on the map. At a higher level of sophistication, the results of statistical analyses of scholarly data can also be displayed on maps.

Urged onward by this sort of technological revolution, geographical research is expanding. And this development in turn has given birth to the third way to conceptualize historical geography. That is, historical geography can be broadly thought of as the application of geographic research backward to historical periods. This definition accords closely with my own views.[4]

In the remainder of this chapter, I would like to introduce the major themes of research and points of contention among scholars in the field of historical geography. I will divide my discussion into three parts, organized by period.

Historical geography on the prehistoric epoch

The field of geography includes physical, as well as human, geography. The study of natural phenomena—topography and the geological processes that give rise to it—examines developments that predate written records, and indeed, trace back to the epoch before the birth of humanity. Human geography, on the other hand, explores the relationships of human beings with nature. As such, while it emphasizes geographic perspectives, it depends heavily upon archaeological excavation. Such a focus is sometimes referred to as "archaeological geography."

The five-volume *Kōza kōko chirigaku* ("Course in Archaeological Geography") series edited during the 1980s, under the general supervision of Fujioka Kenjirō, represents a monumental achievement in this field. Although Fujioka passed away in 1985, without living to see the series reach completion, this project marked the culmination of a distinguished career that began with college studies in archaeology and, from graduate school onward, shifted to a specialization in geography.[5]

During this same decade, Yasuda Yasunori pioneered a new style of research. Recognizing the correlation between human history and environmental change, he gathered layers of sediment from excavation sites throughout Japan, and analyzed the contents of that soil for pollen and diatoms, enabling him to precisely reconstruct shifts in climate and forest vegetation, as well as fluctuations in water levels. Until Yasuda, pollen analysis was generally regarded as falling within the province of archaeology, because the soil samples examined were extracted from remains unearthed in archaeological excavations. Pollen, however, did not simply fall straight to the ground. Rather, pollination occurred when spores were carried by insects or blown by the wind, resulting in the discovery of specimens from plants found in otherwise distant biomes and indicating a pattern of widespread diffusion apropos to geographic study as well. Yasuda advocated that his approach, focusing on the massive impact on human history wrought by changes to climate and vegetation, be labeled "geoarchaeology."[6]

Yasuda's methodology had been influenced by the work of Kusaka Masayoshi, in the 1970s and 1980s. Focusing on the restoration of past environments, Kusaka deftly incorporated research into alluvial deposits and alluvial plains, and single-handedly paved the way for the study of environmental geography. More recently, Takahashi Manabu, taking his cue from geoarchaeology, has pursued the issue of microtopography into the archaic era, and raised the level of discussion surrounding landform environment analysis. Through engagement with environmental studies of this sort, arguments about related present-day issues—such as sustainable development and UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) program—have also come to the fore.[7]

The classical age: a focus on capital city planning and rural land division

Under the influence of a tributary system in which China was paramount, leaders in archaic and early classical Japan strove to enact a model of national administration grounded in Chinese legal

precepts, known today as the *ritsuryō* system or the *ritsuryō* polity.[8] Among the geographic phenomena revealed in maps from the classical era, the grid plan according to which cities were laid out (*jōbō-sei*) and the land division of rural settlements (*jōri-sei*) are especially significant. Before I discuss the research that has been conducted on these topics from a geographic perspective, it is necessary to outline a basic description of each.

The foundations of city planning in Japan can be said to date to the time of Fujiwara-kyō at the end of the seventh century.[9] Kishi Toshio's reconstruction has long been considered the standard work on geographic developments in and around this early capital. While numerous discoveries of blocks outside the area Kishi recognized as the Fujiwara-kyō city grid have rendered his reconstruction problematic and spawned several new models, thus far none of the newer reconstructions has earned broad general acceptance among scholars.[10]

Commentaries on the next capital city, Nara (Heijō-kyō), focus on the placement of the imperial palace at center north, where both the emperor's residence and government offices stood side by side. At the midpoint along the southern edge of this enclosure rose Suzakumon, the gate from which the city's central thoroughfare, Suzaku Boulevard, ran southward and served to split the capital into left and right halves. Rajōmon, the gate erected at the southernmost end of the city, stood at the intersection with Kujō (Ninth Street).[11]

Based on imported Chinese notions that the emperor should face south, the city was first bisected into a southeastern "right capital" and a southwestern "left capital." Thus, for instance, the area between Nijō (Second Street), the large east–west road directly south of the Suzaku Gate, and even further to the south, became the Sanjō (Third Street) region. In addition, major north–south roads that fanned out from the palace in both directions were designated as avenues (*bō*) and sequentially numbered from one through four, in order of the closest to the most distant. Bounded on each side by a major road, each block was further traversed both crosswise and lengthwise by three narrow lanes, thereby subdividing the resultant space into sixteen parcels. Thereafter each one of these parcels was referred to as a lot (*tsubo*) and assigned a number from one through sixteen, beginning from the location closest to the palace, proceeding outward to the southern edge, moving to an adjacent lot the next column over, and then doubling back northward in a winding pattern.

In this way, Suzaku Boulevard played fundamentally the same role in providing an axis of symmetry for both the left and right sides of the capital. That said, the earliest city plans indicate that an extended section, called the North Avenue neighborhood, in a limited area north of Ichijō (First Street), was the only area in the western half of the right capital where blocks spanned just half the standard distance from north to south.[12] The zone that comprises the city center of present-day Nara, moreover, formed from the placement of temples such as Tōdaiji and Kōfukuji at the eastern edge of the left capital together with the lengthening of Sanjō. Although researchers have long known of this "outer capital" (*gekyō*), questions remain as to when and how this area was created, due to the paucity of contemporaneous written sources coupled with relatively few excavations of streets and roads.[13]

This urban grid pattern of streets and avenues was also adopted for Heian-kyō (Kyoto). Here, planners instituted various minor modifications, such as altering the designation for lots from *tsubo* to *chō*, while nevertheless upholding the same basic system for subdividing the city. For historical geographers, who prioritize changes from past to present that can be captured cartographically, the ability through modern, 1:25,000 scale, maps to confirm grid patterns based on ancient capital city planning—and thus prove that influences from ancient cityscapes extend to the present day—represents an exceedingly significant development. When reconstructing these grid patterns throughout the capital at Nara, the distance between small roads was found to be forty *jō* (approximately 120 meters), which, measuring about five millimeters on a 1:25,000 scale

map, aligns with the locations of present-day roads, rivers, and other borders to within roughly five millimeters. In addition, although the place names indicated on current topographical maps do not generally reflect it, the boundaries of past lots mostly correspond to the divisions for open fields (*koaza*).[14] Meiji-period cadastral maps are also highly valuable for identifying the scope of these open fields.

In the villages and farmlands that spread out beyond the exterior of grid-patterned capital cities, the *ritsuryō* structure implemented a second grid-patterned land division known as the *jōri* system. This schema utilized the same nomenclature (*jō*) for rows that ran east–west as the grid pattern for cities, although the breadth of the zones differed. The *jō* of the rural system each spanned six *chō* (equivalent to roughly 654 meters) and were somewhat longer than those used in city grids. Similarly, the urban and rural systems also shared another feature, a separate parcel of land labeled as a lot (*tsubo*), but neither the total area nor the overall number of these parcels were the same. Each *chō* was 109 square meters and, divided into a six-by-six grouping, each collection of thirty-six lots together formed a single *ri*. These *ri* seem to have been originally organic units, but with the passing of time they came to be assigned numbers. Accordingly, this meant that locations were specified in units of 109 square meters and labeled in the form "*_jō*, *_ri*, *_tsubo*." The grid-patterned *jōri* system thus shares characteristics in common with the modern GIS system discussed above.[15]

A unified system of rural land division was instituted throughout the Nara Basin, especially across the region to the south of Nara. Proceeding from a point closest to the imperial palace and employing the *chidori* process for assigning numbers, the system of rural land division came to be grounded in exactly the same principles as those found in the grid plan for capital cities.[16]

The system of rural land division remained in place through the medieval period, to which we now turn. Although a portion of the landscapes that developed up to and during the classical period show degrees of inconsistency, the core mission of historical geography lies in utilizing those features that still survive today for reconstructing the landscape of ages past. History and archaeology proceed from differing modes of thought with regard to this effort.

The medieval age: research into cities, villages, and estate maps

Japan's medieval age is generally regarded as the epoch from the end of the twelfth through the sixteenth centuries although there remain differences of opinion on both the beginning and endpoints of the period. Both boundaries are significant to the field of historical geography, as is the entire intervening span of time. In this section, I will discuss the major topics on which scholars have focused their studies of this period, which can be broadly divided into those concerning villages and of cities.

Scholarship on the historical geography of medieval villages has inspired considerable debate over the distinctive properties of the medieval village, particularly with regard to Chinese influences during the classical era and continuities from that epoch into the medieval period.[17] One school of thought identifies the grid-patterned land divisions (producing a regulated landscape of square *chō* bounded by a network of roads and irrigation canals) and the nomenclature applied to them (each *chō* divided into six-by-six blocks designated as *ri*, subdivided into individual plots counted in units of *tsubo*) as the two essential elements of the *jōri* system, and emphasizes the Chinese origins of the system. Another, however, notes that Chinese influence on the rural landscape was scant in comparison with its effect on the layout of capital cities, and calls attention instead to the uniquely Japanese characteristics of the *jōri* system. Kinda Akihiro's work on Nara- and Heian-period village structure, moreover, considers the patterns of land divisions indicated on cadastral maps in light of micro-topographical conditions, and precisely identifies the present-day locations of residential lands that appear in historical sources.[18]

Accordingly, the phenomenon of village formation during the subsequent medieval period has also become a matter of interest. Sano Shizuyo has written an environmental history of villages and riparian zones during the medieval and early modern periods.[19] Focusing on village landscapes and the medieval development of rivers, she examined utilization and resource management in the Lake Biwa coastal region and along the shoreline of the tributary Yasu River in Ōmi Province (modern Shiga prefecture). Yoshida Toshihiro and Itō Toshikazu have also considered the medieval village from the perspective of managerial issues.[20]

The majority of maps depicting villages during the classical and medieval eras are Heian- and Kamakura-period maps of estates (*shōen*). These, of course, reflect the perspectives of the ruling elite. But scholars have also attempted to reconstruct the ways in which local residents conceptualized things, drawing on maps and charts produced and submitted by villagers in the course of legal proceedings. This sort of humanistic geography has exerted a major influence upon text-based historical studies as well.[21]

As I suggested in the previous section, Chinese influence on the landscapes of cities was substantial during the classical era. This has generated considerable debate about continuities into medieval times. Kyoto, the imperial capital for more than a thousand years, persisted in the same location through the end of the medieval era, into the early modern period, and into the modern age, even as it underwent profound changes of character. For this reason, while archeological excavations have been numerous and frequent, most have been confined to narrow areas, making analysis and interpretation undeniably difficult. Scholars struggle to make the findings unearthed in these limited digs speak, and to trace their stories in detail.[22]

Kyoto remained an economic capital as well throughout this long span of time, while to the south, the eastern fringes of the older capital at Nara—which came to be called the outer capital (*gekyō*)—and other smaller urban areas remained the foremost cities in the country. This hierarchical arrangement can be traced back to the classical period, when Kyoto sat at the apex of a structure supported by the provincial capitals (*kokufu*) across the country. Close consideration of the results of archaeological excavations reveals that while these provincial capitals were conceived in terms of fixed spaces and areas, they are better understood as what Kinda Akihiro has called "noncontiguous, functionally compartmentalized" cityscapes, wherein the provincial headquarters and the roads leading to it served as nuclei or axes around which numerous enclosures for workshops, storehouses, living quarters, and government offices were positioned.[23] Scholars today further recognize that this kind of fragmentary, functionally compartmentalized organization of space also characterized the provincial capitals and military administrative centers of the medieval age.

On the other hand, Kobayashi Kentarō has followed the orthodox historical geographer's approach of confirming land distribution patterns from cadastral maps produced at the start of the modern period.[24] Beginning with the late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century castle town of Ichijōdani, in Echizen province (modern Fukui prefecture), Kobayashi used cadastral maps to confirm land-allotment patterns, and then used these as a basis for identifying the residences of the Asakura house's retainer corps. Archeological excavations later confirmed these findings—and also discovered an artisans' residential area to the north that even Kobayashi had not foreseen—leading to the designation of this area as a special historical site, and its development as an historical park. This is an extraordinary example of historical geographic research on the medieval period leading to regional revitalization.

Kobayashi has also conducted studies of the Nōbi Plain, the landholdings of Chōshū domain, and Tosa province, each centered on the reconstruction of cities with a focus on regional settlements. His work on Tosa is particularly interesting, centering as it does on analysis of the Chōsokabe cadastral register, Chōsokabe chikenchō, a forerunner of early modern land surveys

and the only example of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's countrywide cadastral surveys for which the results from an entire province survive. Building on this, Kobayashi next moved backward in time to examine the fourteenth century and the marketplace at Niimi Estate in Bitchū province (modern Okayama prefecture), calling attention to the division of the land into plots resembling strips of paper, and reconstructing the landscape of the estate's commercial center.[25]

Yamamura Aki took up this tradition of emphasizing land allotment patterns revealed in cadastral maps produced at the start of the modern period. Her central methodology consists of creating distribution maps for each of multiple successive periods, and then comparing them. In this manner she has taken up such topics as the location of the Kamakura shogunate's offices, the evolution of the provincial capital of Bungo from provincial capital to castle town under the Ōtomo *sengoku daimyo* house, and the provincial capital of Nagatō, a minor early modern castle town under the Mōri house. She has also enthusiastically researched the distribution of temples and shrines, although some of this work has been criticized by mainstream historians for its inevitable inclusion of folkloric traditions in the mix.[26]

It is, I think, essential to scrutinize the discussions of maps constructed in the modern era in a positive fashion, but also to bear in mind that these maps express the perceptions of the era in which they were produced—and in particular of the political leaders who produced them. We must continue to develop new methodologies for reading and interpreting them. The application of the new movement centering on historical geographic study of *shōen* maps discussed above to the study of cities is a product of just such an effort.

The study of temple towns (*jinai machi*) constitutes another important area of research in historical geography. The principal players here are Mizuta Yoshikazu, Kanai Toshi, and Amano Tarō.[27] My own work takes up Kobayashi's topic of cities and towns and, following in the tradition of reconstructing landscapes from cadastral maps, examines circulation, distribution, and the market system that formed the backdrop to the landscape of medieval urban centers. I have also added to the studies by sounding a warning concerning the problematic nature of using early modern cadastral maps to research the landscapes of medieval cities and towns.[28]

To wrap up my survey of scholarship on cities, I would like to raise two additional points concerning the influence of related disciplines on historical geography. The first is the historian Amino Yoshihiko's work on medieval cities, which centers on the keyword *muen* ("unconnectedness" or "non-connectedness").[29] In Amino's view, medieval cities, and the marketplaces from which they arose, represented "unconnected spaces," independent of proprietorial overlords. Residents of these spaces, he maintained, embraced their "unconnectedness"; enjoyed special rights to travel freely between domains, free of tax impositions by local powers; and engaged in trade, representing one manifestation of what Amino called "non-agricultural peoples" (*hinōgyōmin*), in what he referred to as "urban areas" (*toshiteki na ba*).[30]

The second work from related disciplines that I want to highlight is architectural historian Itō Takeshi's "temple grounds and towns" (*kedai to machi*) theory, which calls attention to the special character of these kinds of spaces. The grounds and compounds of shrines and temples, Itō contends, were planar amalgamations, extending outward in spirals from a single nucleus. Towns, by contrast, were linear amalgamations organized along roads and other axes.[31]

Finally, I would like to make two points concerning recent trends in the historical geography of the medieval era. First, interdisciplinary cooperation with neighboring fields like document-based historical studies and archeology has advanced tremendously in recent years. Second, and closely related to this first point, analysis of cadastral maps is by no means a methodology exclusive to historical geography. Quite the contrary, medieval historians and archeologists are also developing this sort of study. Indeed, returning to the topic I raised in the first section of this chapter, I would argue that the special feature of historical geography is its place in the current of

early modern cartographic history, particularly the work on the cadastral maps produced countrywide at the start of the Meiji era.

In place of a conclusion—historical geography and reconstruction after the Great East Japan Earthquake

As related in the preceding pages, cadastral maps attached to land registries produced almost simultaneously across the country during the opening years of the Meiji period provide sources unique to the study of historical geography in Japan. Scholars have used these maps to reconstruct landscapes from the classical to early modern periods, under the assumption that the landscape has remained unchanged throughout this long span. But this assumption is problematic, and yet almost entirely unexamined by any research to date. Addressing this issue necessitates positioning cadastral maps within the overall history of map production stretching back to the classical age. Henceforth, scholars must also engage in more rigorous and more extensive source criticism of pictorial works.

In the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, as I considered the matter of reconstruction from the position of historical geography, I became aware of the potential of the early Meiji cadastral maps as historical sources for examining subsequent micro-level changes. That is, while we historical geographers had hitherto seen cadastral maps as a way to move backward in time, to earlier eras, we are now also beginning to see them as tools for achieving just the opposite—for tracing the changes that have brought us from the Meiji period to the present.[32]

Notes

1 Nihon chishi kenkyūjo, *Chirigaku jiten*, 190.
2 The format used for addresses in these registers (for example, "Ashiya City, __ ward, 5 *banchi*") dates back to the Meiji era, in contrast to the system now employed for residential addresses (for example, "Ashiya City, __ ward, 2–3"), which is based on a law governing residential nomenclature enacted in 1962.
3 See Kinda Akihiro, *Jōri to sonraku no rekishi chirigaku kenkyū*.
4 See Fujita Hirotsugu, "Chirigaku kara mita tōshiteki na ba: Kaiga shiryō ni 'Tōshi' keikan o saguru"; or "Chisekizu o mochiita keikan fukugen to saigai fukko."
5 Fujioka Kenjirō, *Kōza Nihon chirigaku 1: Sōron to kenkyūhō*; *Kōza Nihon chirigaku 2: Kodai toshi Kōza*; *Kōza Nihon chirigaku 3: Rekishiteki tōshi*; *Kōza Nihon chirigaku 4: Sonraku to kaihatsu*; *Kōza Nihon chirigaku 5: Seisan to ryūtsū*.
6 Yasuda Yoshinori, *Kankyō kōkogaku koto-hajime*.
7 Kusaka Masayoshi, *Heiya no chikei kankyō*, and *Rekishi jidai no chikei kankyō*. Takahashi Manabu, *Heiya no kankyō kōkogaku*.
8 For more on this, see Chapter 6 of this volume.
9 Senda Minoru, *Kodai Nihon no rekishi chirigaku-teki kenkyū*.
10 Kishi Toshio, *Kodai kyuto no tankyū* and *Nihon kodai kyuto no kenkyū*. See also Hayashibe Hitoshi, "Fujiwara-kyō no jōbōsei: Sono jitsuzō to igi."
11 Since 2005, excavations of remains at Shimomitsuhashi have advanced, revealing that the *jōbō* system extended southward beyond Kujō. As a result of this "Jūjō theory," new issues have arisen with regard to the movement of the capital to Heian (Kyoto). Scholars continue to monitor the progress of this discussion.
12 Inoue Kazuto, *Nihon kodai tojosei no kenkyū: Furjiwarakyo Heijō-kyō no shiteki igi*.
13 Asada Makiko, "Heijō-kyo gekyō no keikaku-shaku ni kansuru ichikōsatsu."
14 *Koaza* in the Nara Basin can be verified by maps on a scale of 1:5000. See Nara kenritsu Kashihara kokogaku kenkyūsho, *Yamato no kuni jōri fukugenzu: Yamato no kuni Jōri no sōgōteki kenkyū chizu hen*.
15 Two types of approach have been utilized for counting the rows of lots in each individual *ri*. The first, the *chidori* method, required reaching the end of a column, moving over to an adjacent lot, and then doubling back in the opposite direction, as with the blocks in city grids. The competing *heikō* style, in

contrast, involved a zigzag pattern wherein upon reaching the sixth lot at the end of a column, counting for the seventh lot would resume from the top of the neighboring column.

16 Suzaku Boulevard, the thoroughfare that began from the entrance into the imperial palace compound at Suzakumon and which divided the city of Nara into east and west, connected with the Lower Road (Shimotsumichi) beyond Rajōmon in the south. Numbered rows began to the south of Rajōmon, while the counting of columns to the east and west was based on their proximity to the Lower Road. Here the urban grid pattern tied to Suzaku Boulevard and the rural land divisions centered on the Lower Road to which each corresponded. The point of departure for starting to count each *ri* of land was, to the east of the Lower Road, from the northwest corner, while to the west of the Lower Road the process began from the northeast corner.

17 Debate on medieval cities has, in fact, developed along similar lines.

18 Kinda, *Jōri to sonraku no rekishi chirigaku kenkyū*.

19 Sano Shizuyo, *Chūkinsei no sonraku to mizube no kankyōshi: keikan, seigyō, shigen kanri*.

20 Yoshida Toshihiro, "Chūsei sonraku no kōzō to sono henyō katei: 'shōson = sankyogata sonraku' ron no rekishi chirigaku-teki saikentō"; Itō Toshikazu, "Chūsei Tōgoku no 'horinouchi' gun ni kansuru rekishi chirigaku-teki kenkyū: Kita-Kantō o jirei toshite," and "Kii no kuni no 'Yamahata (Yakihata)' ni kansuru rekishi chirigaku-teki kenkyū."

21 Perhaps the most impressive single study is Kinda Akihiro et al., *Nihon kodai shōenzu*. For the medieval period, see Katsuragawa ezu kenkyūkai, *Shōenzu no kosumorojī – jō, ge*, as well as Fujita, *Shōen ezu ga kataru kodai, chūsei*.

22 Ashikaga Kenryō, *Chūkinsei toshi no rekishi chiri: machi, suji, zushi o megutte*.

23 Kinda Akihiro, "Kokufu no keitai to kōzō ni tsuite," 63.

24 Kobayashi Kentarō, *Sengoku jōkamachi no kenkyū*.

25 Kobayashi, *Sengoku jōkamachi no kenkyū*.

26 Yamamura Aki, *Chūsei toshi no kūkan kōzō*.

27 Mizuta Yoshikazu, "Jinai-machi no keitai saikō"; Kanai Toshi, *Jinaimachi no rekishi chirigaku-teki kenkyū*; Amano Tarō, "Ōsaka Ishiyama Honganji Terauchi-chō puran no fukugen ni kansuru kenkyū: ichihitei to naibukōzō o megutte."

28 My most recent publication on this is "Chirigaku kara mita tōshiteki na ba: kaiga shiryō ni 'tōshi' keikan o saguru."

29 A thorough explanation of Amino's concept of *muen* appears in Alan S. Christy's introduction to *Rethinking Japanese History*, xx–xi, and elsewhere in that volume.

30 As Alan Christy notes,

> for Amino, the terms *rural* and *urban* have little to do with scale and everything to do with the character of daily life. An urban settlement is inescapably a part of a circulation network. It is a place where exchange is a fundamental activity, where production is premised upon consumption elsewhere, and where equivalences between things are determined. Amino characterizes as urban town after town that most Japanese would think of as hopelessly isolated and miniscule. He highlights the vast networks and constant mobility that he believes animated the Japanese past. With the proliferation of urban nodes in a network covering the islands, even the images of rural communities where agriculture was dominant are unstable, for the "city" is no longer far away.
>
> Amino, *Rethinking Japanese History*, xvii–xix

For Amino's ideas on medieval urban places, see *Chūsei toshi-ron* and *Muen kugai raku*. In English, see *Rethinking Japanese History*.

31 Itō Takeshi, *Tōshi no kūkanshi*. I have discussed these ideas at length in my "Review of Itō Takeshi *Toshi no kūkanshi*."

32 For more on this idea, see Fujita, "Chisekizu o mochiita keikan fukugen to saigai fukko."

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2
Climate and environment in history

Bruce L. Batten

History is the study of the human past. Historians are thus concerned with people's individual and collective deeds and characteristics and how those things have changed over time. As a species, *Homo sapiens* has existed for perhaps 200,000 years. The number of individuals to have lived exceeds 100 billion.[1] That leaves historians with a lot of room for study, even if they limit their attention to the 5,000 years or so since the invention of writing.

But wait, there's more: the natural environment. Although some historical writing treats society as though it exists in a vacuum and develops according to its own internal logic, such is not the case. It is true that certain aspects of the human experience, for example intellectual trends, bear no obvious relation to our physical surroundings. But all material aspects of our lives are influenced—or at least enabled—by our natural environment. And that environment is in turn affected by our own activities. These premises underlie the relatively new field of environmental history.[2]

The environmental history of Japan is the subject of this chapter. The field is not yet mature, so I am unable to provide a "how-to" introduction. Instead, I will describe how scholars have addressed the following questions: What is the nature of the Japanese environment, and how has it changed over time? How has the environment influenced society? How have humans altered their environment or responded to its challenges? (For reasons of space, my approach ignores Japanese attitudes toward nature, which undoubtedly have had some effect on people's actions.) I will conclude with a brief recapitulation on sources, some suggestions for further reading, and a hortatory call to action. Although the coverage of this book technically ceases at 1600 CE, this chapter occasionally spills over into more recent times for narrative purposes or to make a point.

Reconstruction of past environments

The basic facts of Japan's physical environment are more properly the subject of the previous chapter on geography, but there seems no harm in summarizing them here.[3] Japan is an island country located off the eastern coast of the Asian mainland. It consists of four main islands (from north to south, Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu) and thousands of smaller ones, as well as adjacent territorial seas. The country spans over 3,000 km from northeast to southwest and has

an area (including territorial seas) of roughly 377,000 square kilometers, slightly less than the U.S. state of Montana. Japan is located on the Pacific Ring of Fire at the juncture of several tectonic plates and is thus prone to volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunami. Topography is rugged and mountainous except where rivers flow into the ocean; most of the larger plains are located on the Pacific (east) side of Honshu. Climate ranges from subarctic in the north to subtropical in the south but is temperate in most parts of the archipelago, with four distinct seasons. Climate is strongly affected by ocean currents such as the warm Kuroshio (Black Current or Japanese Current), flowing from the south, and the cold Oyashio (Parent or Okhotsk Current), flowing from the north. Another factor is the East Asian monsoon, which brings rain in early summer. Typhoons are common in the fall. Mineral resources, formerly abundant, are today largely exhausted. The islands are heavily forested (mainly with broadleaf trees in the south and conifers further north), and marine resources such as fish are also abundant.

Viewed in the fullness of time, few of these geographical facts are set in stone (so to speak). The archipelago itself did not exist before 15 million years ago, when it detached from the Asian continent.[4] Since then, the shape of the islands, the climatic conditions they experience, and their resource endowments have changed, and continue to change.[5] Some of these changes, particularly in recent centuries, are anthropogenic, but over the long term most are of natural origin.

Here I will not attempt a comprehensive account but will focus on one specific issue: climate change. There are three reasons. First, climate change is one of the important causes of other observed changes in Japan's natural environment, for example rising or falling sea levels or changes in flora and fauna.[6] Second, climate change operates on a scale that is relevant to human history. Climate following the end of the Ice Age has been generally stable, but there have been many short-term (annual to decadal) fluctuations, as well as some longer-term (centennial) ones, most notably the Little Ice Age of the sixteenth through mid-nineteenth centuries. Third, research on past climate change is of intrinsic interest and importance for the light it may cast on contemporary issues.

The reconstruction of past climates is an important and growing field of study in Japan as elsewhere. Reconstructions fall into two major categories: those based on written records and those based on physical evidence. Research of both kinds tends to focus on the Little Ice Age, which falls outside the scope of this book (although I will touch upon it again). Nevertheless, a number of studies extend to earlier times.[7]

For whatever reason, Japanese people from ancient times have shown great interest in weather and the seasons, which as a result figure prominently in diaries and other historical sources.[8] Courtier diaries, for example, contain records of cherry-blossom viewing parties held each year in Kyoto when the trees achieved full bloom. The dates vary somewhat from year to year, reflecting variations in mean temperature in early spring. This data has been mined by many scholars, most notably Aono Yasuyuki, who has published temperature reconstructions for Kyoto going back to the ninth century.[9] Another example of the use of written records concerns winter freezing dates of Lake Suwa in Nagano prefecture in the mountains of central Honshu. Mikami Takehiko and his colleagues used records of freezing kept by Suwa Shrine to calculate mean winter temperatures going back to 1444.[10]

The other type of reconstruction makes use of physical evidence or "proxies." One such proxy is pollen. Perhaps the best known pollen-based study is that by Sakaguchi Yutaka, who analyzed a peat column collected at Ozegahara Moor in the mountains of Gunma prefecture.[11] The analysis centered on the relative frequency of pollen from two species of pine, one favoring colder growing conditions than the other. As a result, Sakaguchi was able to construct a temperature curve extending back approximately 8,000 years. Tree rings, typically of Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica; sugi*) and cypress (*Chamaecypress obscura; hinoki*), are another popular object

of study. For example, Sweda (Sueda) Tatsuo and Takeda Shin'ichi used disks and cores from about 200 medieval and early modern cypress logs from the Kiso Mountains to estimate winter temperatures going back to 1177 CE.[12] Finally, many recent studies are based on lake varves, that is, annual sediment layers. Cores of 430,000 years and more than 150,000 years, respectively, have been recovered from Lake Biwa in Shiga prefecture and Lake Suigetsu in Fukui prefecture.[13] The cores were originally used to calibrate radiocarbon curves, a topic that need not concern us here. But they have also proved gold mines for paleoclimatologists, who have made extensive use of their sedimentary and geochemical features and the fossil pollen and diatoms they contain to reconstruct past temperatures and extreme events such as floods and tsunami.[14]

Whether based on historical or scientific evidence, all of these studies show that climatic trends in Japan were generally similar to those in other temperate parts of the Northern Hemisphere.[15] To summarize, the Paleolithic period, which encompassed the Last Glacial Maximum (very roughly 24,000 BCE), was cold. The following Jōmon period was generally warm. A dramatic cooling occurred around 1000 BCE. After a brief return to warm, wet conditions in the late centuries BCE, cooling recommenced. Sakaguchi refers to the ensuing period, *c.* 250–700 CE, as the "Kofun Cold Stage," which was not only cold but also wet.[16] This was followed by Japan's version of the Medieval Warm Period, sometimes called the Little Hypsithermal Period.[17] Summer temperatures increased dramatically after 700, with frequent droughts.[18] Winter temperatures remained low until about 900, after which mild winters became the norm. The Medieval Warm Period came to an end in Japan around 1300. Between 1300 and around 1600, summers remained generally warm, but winters became harsher. Different authors report slightly different results, but it is clear that particularly cold periods occurred in the mid-fourteenth century (roughly 1330s–1360s) and again in the first half of the sixteenth (1520s–1550s). Around 1600, Japan entered the Little Ice Age. As in Europe, temperatures were generally, but not uniformly, cold. Again, authors differ in their conclusions, but the coldest conditions seem to have occurred at the end of the seventeenth century and in the early nineteenth century (1820s–1830s). During these phases, winters were severe with much snowfall, particularly on the Sea of Japan side of Honshu. Summers were cool, particularly in the northern part of the country, and frequently rainy. Interestingly, 1816, known elsewhere as the "year without a summer" because of cooling caused by the massive 1815 eruption of Mt. Tambora in the Dutch East Indies, was wholly unexceptional in Japan. On the other hand, an earlier "year without a summer" occurred in 1783 following the eruptions of Mt. Asama in Japan and the Laki fissure in Iceland; the cold weather significantly exacerbated the ongoing Tenmei Famine (named for the calendar era) in northeastern Japan.[19]

Mention of the Tenmei Famine provides a convenient segue. It is one thing to establish the "facts" of Japan's climate, or more broadly physical environment, and how they have changed over time. It is quite another to say how such physical parameters relate to the course of Japanese history. It is to this topic we now turn.

Environment as actor

It is fair to say that until recently, most discussions of human-natural relations in premodern Japan were concerned primarily with the influence of natural conditions upon society—a way of thinking nowadays decried as "environmental determinism." An early example is the philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō's book *Fūdo* (Climate and Culture), published in 1935.[20] Watsuji classified human cultures on the basis of their physical environment as pastoral, desert, or monsoon. Some of Watsuji's ideas were later adopted and expanded by environmental archaeologist Yasuda Yoshinori. In Yasuda's view, the monsoons and forests of Asia, including Japan, fostered the

emergence of animistic, polytheistic religions and of civilizations more in tune with nature than their monotheistic pastoral or desert equivalents.[21] Such sweeping assertions find little support among historians today.

Other claims have been made about the influence of environmental conditions on Japanese culture and society. For example, it is said that living in a beautiful environment amidst changing seasons has fostered a love of nature, or that overfamiliarity with natural disasters has bred a tendency toward fatalism.[22] These assertions are perhaps not completely wrong, but from a historian's point of view they are problematic. For one thing, the objective reality of these alleged cultural traits is open to question. Are or were Japanese truly more fond of nature or more fatalistic than other people?[23] For another, even granted the traits' existence or importance, ascribing them confidently to environmental factors requires a leap of faith.

The same criticisms apply to other generalizations. For example, some authors state that because Japan is an island country relatively safe from invasion, society was able to develop in its own way at its own pace.[24] Isolation is also said to have contributed to a trend toward decentralization over much of Japanese history.[25] Or we read that Japan's mountainous topography was a force for political fragmentation and regional diversity.[26] All of these claims seem plausible, but it is difficult to say that they have been, or could be, "proved" in any meaningful sense.

That said, it is certainly true that natural events and conditions have influenced people's lives, and hence the course of history, in Japan: the most obvious example is provided by natural disasters. Historical accounts of disasters are legion. One of the most famous is *Hōjōki* (An Account of a Ten-Foot-Square Hut), an early Kamakura period work by Kamo no Chōmei, whose experiences with (among other things) whirlwinds, earthquakes, droughts, typhoons, floods, pestilences, and the deaths and misery they caused persuaded him to retreat from the world and become a hermit.[27] About the only things missing from *Hōjōki* are volcanic eruptions and tsunami, but these, like other categories of disaster, appear frequently in surviving records from all periods of Japanese history.[28] Clearly bad things happened and people suffered greatly (although I hasten to add that in most cases the extent of suffering depended on human as well as environmental factors).

Information on disasters and their effects is also to be found in the archaeological record. Volcanic ash from the eruption of the Kikai caldera south of Kyushu around 5500 BCE rendered huge swaths of western Japan uninhabitable for a period of years or more. Ash-covered fields and residences at the Hashimuregawa site in Kagoshima prefecture, southern Kyushu, dramatically corroborate historical records of an eruption in 874 CE.[29] Excavations in the Kantō Plain have uncovered fields and villages destroyed by the eruptions of Mt. Fuji in 1707 and Mt. Asama in 1783. (Recall that the latter event was also responsible for cold weather and famine.) Archaeology has also revealed evidence of structural damage and liquefaction caused by the 1596 Keichō Fushimi earthquake, as well as of destruction of fields and villages by flooding in the Kofun and medieval eras.[30]

In addition to such one-time events, Japanese society was also influenced by long-standing environmental conditions. People tend to settle where it is easy (or at least possible) to do so in terms of accessibility and availability of resources. So it is no surprise that from ancient times Japanese people settled in valleys, basins, and alluvial plains, which were accessible and generally suitable for human life and livelihood (not least, that involving agriculture). Local conditions also influenced settlement and construction at each specific site. A study by the late Kawasumi Tatsunori made use of GIS (geographic information systems) methodology to show that in eighth-century Heijō-kyō (Nara), nobles lived in close proximity to water sources, while large government buildings and temples were built atop Pleistocene terraces, where the ground was sufficiently firm to support them.[31]

Regionally, it is possible to identify variations in society and culture that are clearly rooted in environmental differences. For example, the extent of colonization by immigrant farmers during the Yayoi period was essentially determined by environmental conditions. In the north, Tōhoku and Hokkaido were too cold for rice farming given the technology of the time, while in the south, southern Kyushu and the Ryukyu chain were unsuitable in terms of soil and topography. As a result, the archipelago became split into a central, agricultural zone encompassing most of Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu, and peripheral zones occupied by foragers to the north and south.[32] Although there was a tendency for the central zone to expand at the expense of the peripheral zones over time, the tripartite structure itself survived until the nineteenth century. Societies in the three zones followed separate historical trajectories, and at any given time differed profoundly in most aspects of human life, both material and non-material. In a very real sense, these differences had environmental causes.[33]

Before leaving this topic I should also note none of the three large zones was monolithic; each can be further divided on the basis of local variations in culture, broadly defined. One example beloved of cultural anthropologists and other scholars is the long-standing split between east and west in the central zone.[34] The observed divergences in customs and social structure are generally ascribed to underlying ecological differences, including the greater suitability of the west for wet-rice farming and of the east for dry-field cultivation. More study, however, is certainly required.

In all of the above examples, seemingly unchanging environmental conditions are used to explain, or at least illuminate, characteristics of Japanese society. But, as we have seen, environmental conditions actually change over time, the best example being climate. How have changing climatic conditions influenced the course of history in the Japanese islands?

Perhaps the most that can be said at this point is that there are some very interesting correspondences. The first and most obvious is the close fit between climate change at the end of the last Ice Age and the emergence of the Jōmon culture of sedentary foragers. Although it was previously thought that origins of pottery (and thus, by definition, the Jōmon culture) postdated the end of the Ice Age, pottery is now thought to have emerged earlier, in the context of extreme climatic fluctuations.[35] In either case, the temporal association between climate change and cultural change seems too close to result from chance. Regarding the Jōmon period itself, there seems to be an association between climatic warming and later cooling, on the one hand, and population growth and then decline, on the other.[36] Moving forward in time, one is struck by the spread of agriculture and growth in political organization during the cold Yayoi and Kofun periods, when natural food resources would have been unreliable and social cohesion was needed to overcome the challenges posed by nature.[37] In the historical period, perhaps the most striking correlation is that between rapid climatic oscillations and political unrest in the medieval centuries.[38] (Another, counterintuitive, one is between the onset of the Little Ice Age in the seventeenth century and the robust demographic and economic growth that marked the same period.)

Recently, paleoclimatologist Nakatsuka Takeshi has contributed to this debate by comparing climatic fluctuations (specifically, changes in precipitation as recorded in tree rings) with the archaeological and the historical records. To make a long story short, Nakatsuka finds that periods of political instability in the Japanese islands—not only the medieval period, but also the second century CE, when the Chinese *Wei History* records widespread warfare in Japan—tend to coincide with relatively short-term (decadal) fluctuations in precipitation. Nakatsuka argues that human societies can adapt to either wet or dry conditions, as well as to long-term shifts from one to the other, which are essentially invisible on the scale of a human life. What they cannot easily adapt to is rapid, unforeseen change.[39]

Nakatsuka's research is important because it takes us away from environmental determinism toward a more dynamic conception of the Japanese past. To be sure, natural disasters and climate change can have a direct impact on human society, but what really matters is how society responds and acts. Let us now turn to that human dimension.

Society as actor

The first point to be made here is that humanity's ecological footprint has increased dramatically over the course of human prehistory and history. Early humans caused the extinction of various species of large animals (most dramatically, in North America and New Zealand), and they altered natural landscapes by the use of fire, but that was about all. Today our activities are resulting in historically unprecedented climate change and what is often characterized as the Sixth Mass Extinction event of geological time. Many scholars now refer to our era as the "Anthropocene" because of the profound, perhaps irreversible, changes we are inflicting on earth's natural systems.

Both the archaeological and the historical records contain many examples of how human activities altered Japan's natural environment. The first example is the most tentative: it has been argued that in Japan, as in other parts of the world, the extinction of Pleistocene megafauna resulted from overhunting.[40] Later instances of human influence are more clear-cut. With the advent of agriculture, people modified ecosystems by intentionally introducing foreign crops and livestock and unintentionally introducing weeds and pests.[41] People cut down forests and created fields in their place. They created irrigation works such as ponds, canals, and dams. They built dikes along rivers and shorelines, and sometimes diverted entire rivers (for example, the Tone River near Edo in the seventeenth century). They built roads, cities, and castles. Over the very long term, the scale of these interventions tended to increase as the result of population growth and enhanced technical and organizational capabilities.[42]

Probably the single biggest impact was deforestation. Cutting down trees to make fields was just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Premodern Japanese cut down entire forests to provide fuel for the production of pottery, iron, and salt. They cut down more forests to provide wood for monumental architecture, first for the ancient capitals of Nara and Kyoto, but also later for other cities and castle towns throughout the archipelago.[43] All of this resulted in dramatic changes to the landscape. An innovative study of old paintings by Ogura Jun'ichi shows that many of the mountains around Kyoto were essentially denuded of trees by late Muromachi or early Edo times.[44]

How we evaluate human interventions in nature depends on our perspective. If one places value on a pristine natural environment, then all interventions are by definition bad. Even from a parochial, human-centered perspective, some activities had very negative consequences. Cutting down trees led to erosion and flooding, as well as local climate change. Urbanization resulted in the pollution of ground water and rivers by human waste.[45] Overall, however, it is possible to view most interventions positively, as adaptations that were intended to, and did, benefit society.

Over time, Japanese society came to actively *manage*—as opposed to merely exploit—nature, and in the process of doing so became more *resilient*.[46] The notion of resilience has been the focus of several recent studies of the medieval and early modern periods. In one example, Philip C. Brown studied riparian works in what is now Niigata prefecture on the Sea of Japan coast, an area highly prone to flooding. According to Brown, tireless and creative efforts by local villagers and daimyo resulted in better flood control, more stable conditions of life and work, and expansion of arable land and production during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[47] Another example

is a quantitative study of famines by Saitō Osamu. Saitō found that famines decreased in frequency and severity during the medieval and early modern periods, despite worsening climatic conditions. Like Brown, Saito concludes that Japanese society became increasingly resilient. He attributes this to institutional factors, specifically territorial consolidation by daimyo.[48]

A related concept emphasized by many authors is *sustainability*, and here, too, the late medieval and early modern periods are thought to represent an important threshold. Following are several concrete examples, divided for convenience into locally oriented and nationally oriented studies.

At the local level, three favorite examples are Lake Biwa, *satoyama*, and the city of Edo. The area around Mt. Biwa, mentioned above in connection with lake varves and climate reconstruction, sustained dense human populations from early times. (Kyoto was located nearby.) Humans depended on the lake for fish and for aquatic plants used for clothing, roof thatching, fertilizer, livestock feed, and fuel. Nonetheless, according to Sano Shizuyo, Biwa remained extremely clean through the nineteenth century; indeed, the harvesting of reeds and other plants is thought to have actively contributed to water purity.[49] *Satoyama* refers to managed rural landscapes, including villages, fields, and surrounding woodlands. Even the woodlands were far from natural; they were systematically exploited for firewood, charcoal, fertilizer, and edible plants and animals, and their composition was partly the result of these human activities. But the resources used were renewable, and the system as a whole was sustainable.[50] Finally, early modern Japanese cities, and particularly Edo, are noted for their cleanliness and small ecological footprints; for example, human waste ("night soil") was recycled for use as fertilizer in the surrounding fields.[51] This provides an interesting contrast with Japan's ancient capitals (not to mention cities in other parts of the world): something must have been learned over time.

Sustainability at the national level is also claimed by some authors, mostly with reference to the early modern period. Not just the city of Edo but Japanese society as a whole made use of what Kitō Hiroshi calls the "5Rs": repair, reuse, rental and lease, recycling, and reduction.[52] Kitō also notes that after about 1750 Japan had a static population, which he cites as a model for contemporary humanity.[53] (Japan's population plateaued at about 30 million in the early eighteenth century and remained essentially unchanged until the late nineteenth century.[54]) More familiar to most non-Japanese readers will be the work of Conrad Totman, who argued that densely populated Japan avoided ecological catastrophe as the result of wise forestry practices (not just cutting but replanting) during the early modern period, reversing the earlier trend toward deforestation.[55] (Totman's work formed the substance of later claims by John Richards and Jared Diamond that early modern Japan was a rare example of a sustainable society.[56]) Here again is a counterintuitive, and welcome, example of the replacement of environmentally unfriendly practices by friendly ones.

In sum, research on the environmental history of premodern Japan supports the following view. In early times, Japanese society was essentially reactive to natural conditions and events. Over time, however, humans became increasingly important actors on their own. They altered the environment ever more profoundly, sometimes with unexpected consequences. Over the long run, society achieved considerable managerial control over nature and the ability to successfully meet many of the challenges it faced. During early modern times, Japan arguably evolved into a sustainable society existing within more or less fixed ecological limits. To the extent this characterization is accurate, Japan's historical trajectory has significant contemporary relevance, a point to which I return in the next section.

Sources and prospects for further study

I conclude with a brief review of sources and prospects for further study. For purposes of classification, historians often divide their source material into "primary" and "secondary" categories. Primary sources are written materials roughly contemporaneous with the events being studied; secondary sources are subsequent analyses or descriptions by historians (or others). This crude distinction holds for environmental history, but only if we substantially expand the meaning of "primary source" to include more than just written records.

True, traditional primary sources are of immense value to the environmental historian. As we have seen, the Japanese historical record provides voluminous evidence of weather conditions, disasters, and other occurrences. Many of the originally scattered records, particularly those relating to weather, have recently been compiled for ease of use.[57] In addition to such "factual" sources, literary works also include much relevant information, for example, descriptions of natural scenery.[58]

Another type of primary source is visual material such as maps and paintings. Ancient and medieval maps of *shōen* (estates) have been used to reconstruct historical landscapes.[59] So have paintings, as we saw earlier in connection with the research of Ogura Jun'ichi.[60] Paintings also provide information on daily life in its spatial or environmental context. Particularly worthy of mention are the numerous *emakimono* or picture scrolls surviving from classical and medieval times. Although some are fanciful, even these may contain seeds of truth. For example, the twelfth-century Hell Scroll (*Jigoku zōji*) in the Nara National Museum shows a dog gnawing on a human corpse; examples of canine tooth marks on human bones are also known from the archaeological record.[61]

The mention of archaeology brings us to another type of "primary source": physical evidence. We have already seen how pollen, tree rings, and lake varves are used to reconstruct past climatic conditions, and how archaeology provides evidence about ancient volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, floods, and their effects. In addition, human bones or teeth can tell us much about nutrition and health, and excavated artifacts and structures provide direct information about how people lived at the place and time in question. More examples could be cited, but the point is clear: environmental historians can and should make use of more than just traditional historical, or even visual, sources.

What about the secondary or scholarly literature? Not surprisingly, it is scattered among many disciplines: not just history, but also (to list only the most relevant) archaeology, biology, ecology, geography, climatology, and paleoclimatology. Scholars in all of these fields publish in their own specialized journals. (Outside the discipline of history, and to a lesser extent archaeology, book-length studies are rare.) Although foreign scholars have also been active (see the notes to this chapter), most studies are, of course, by Japanese. Fortunately for those of us in the English-speaking world, Japanese scientists publish their important research results in international journals, in English. A search for appropriate English keywords on Web of Science or the like, therefore, will produce useful results from journals in most of the above fields.

What is true for Japanese scientists is not true for Japanese historians and archaeologists, so it is necessary to read their work in Japanese. For some topics, summaries of current knowledge can be found in dictionaries, such as the excellent one on historical disasters by Kitahara Itoko and colleagues.[62] That said, there is no way around reading books and articles. It is impossible to provide a comprehensive guide here, so I will simply mention three indispensable multivolume works.[63] The first is the 15-volume *Kōza: Bunmei to kankyō* (Essays on Civilization and the Environment), published by Asakura Shoten in 1995–1996 under the auspices of scholars at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) in Kyoto.[64] This ambitious set

covers the environmental history of the entire world, not just Japan. Next is the six-volume *Shirīzu Nihon rettō no sanman gosen nen* (Series: Thirty-Five Thousand Years of the Japanese Archipelago), published in 2011 by Bun'ichi Sōgō.[65] This has an ecological focus and emphasizes "wise use" and "multilayered governance" of resources in premodern times. Finally, there is the five-volume *Kankyō no Nihonshi* (Environmental Japanese History), published by Yoshikawa Kōbunkan in 2012–2013.[66] This chronologically and thematically comprehensive project was the brainchild of Hirakawa Minami and other prominent historians. Its publication represents a validation of environmental history by the Japanese historical community.

In closing, possibly the biggest challenge in Japanese environmental history is to bring the field into the mainstream of research on world environmental history. This will require greater collaboration between Japanese and foreign historians. The former are prone to tightly focused empirical research, much of it conducted without reference to scholarly discourse outside Japan. The latter are prone to broader, more conceptual work drawing on questions or approaches in the English-language literature on world environmental history. One hopes that in coming years, the two can combine their respective strengths to shed light on some of the important questions that emerge from the Japanese experience. To what extent is it accurate to consider premodern Japan a sustainable society that respected its ecological limits? How was a "soft landing" to zero population growth achieved during the seventeenth century? Was Japan uniquely successful in weathering (so to speak) the Little Ice Age, and if so, how? These questions are important not just for Japan but for the world as a whole as we struggle with contemporary problems such as population growth and climate change. Focused, collaborative research between Japanese scholars and their foreign counterparts can provide some of the needed answers.

Notes

1 Carl Haub, "How Many People Have Ever Lived on Earth?" Haub assumes that *Homo sapiens* is only 50,000 years old, so his estimate may be a bit on the low side—but not by much, since earlier populations would have been minuscule.
2 On which, see J. Donald Hughes, *What Is Environmental History?*
3 For good English-language descriptions of Japan's physical geography, see Conrad Totman, *A History of Japan*, 2nd ed., 11–19, or Gina L. Barnes, "Japan's Natural Setting." In Japanese, see Kokuritsu Kagaku Hakubutsukan, *Nihon rettō no shizenshi*.
4 Gina L. Barnes, "Origins of the Japanese Islands: The New 'Big Picture,'" 30.
5 For an overview, see Umitsu Masatomo, "Nihon rettō no fukugen."
6 On climate-induced floral change, see Matsuo Tsukada, "Vegetation in Prehistoric Japan: The Last 20,000 Years"; Junko Habu, *Ancient Jomon of Japan*, 42–46; and Hikaru Takahara and Ryoma Hayashi, "Paleovegetation during Marine Isotope Stage 3 in East Asia."
7 For a much more detailed account of the material in the next few paragraphs, see Bruce L. Batten, "Climate Change in Japanese History and Prehistory: A Comparative Overview."
8 See Haruo Shirane, *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts*.
9 Yasuyuki Aono and Keiko Kazui, "Phenological Data Series of Cherry Tree Flowering in Kyoto, Japan, and Its Application to Reconstruction of Springtime Temperatures since the 9th Century"; Y. Aono and S. Saito, "Clarifying Springtime Temperature Reconstructions of the Medieval Period by Gap-Filling the Cherry Blossom Phenological Data Series at Kyoto, Japan."
10 Mikami Takehiko and Ishiguro Naoko, "Suwako keppyō kiroku kara mita kako 550 nenkan no kikō hendō"; Takehiko Mikami, Masumi Zaiki, and Junpei Hirano, "A History of Climatic Change in Japan: A Reconstruction of Meteorological Trends from Documentary Evidence," 197–199.
11 Yutaka Sakaguchi, "Warm and Cold Stages in the Past 7600 Years in Japan and Their Global Correlation—Especially on Climatic Impacts to the Global Sea Level Changes and the Ancient Japanese History—"; Sakaguchi Yutaka, "Kako 8000 nen no kikō henka to ningen no rekishi."
12 Tatsuo Sweda and Shinichi Takeda, "Construction of an 800-Year-Long *Chamaecyparis* Dendrochronology for Central Japan."

13 Lake Biwa: N. Miyoshi et al., "Palynology of a 250-m Core from Lake Biwa: A 430,000-Year Record of Glacial-Interglacial Vegetation Change in Japan." Lake Suigetsu: Takeshi Nakagawa et al., "Stratigraphy and Potential for Improving the Radiocarbon Calibration Model and Understanding of Late Quaternary Climate Changes"; Lake Suigetsu 2006 Varved Sediment Core Project, "Suigetsu Varves 2006," www.suigetsu.org/.
14 In addition to the references in the previous note, see the following articles on Lake Suigetsu. Diatoms: Michinobu Kuwae et al., "A Diatom Record for the Past 400 ka from Lake Biwa in Japan Correlates with Global Paleoclimatic Trends"; Kuwae et al., "Reconstruction of a Climate Record for the Past 140 kyr Based on Diatom Valve Flux Data from Lake Biwa, Japan." Flooding events: Gordon Schlolaut et al., "Event Layers in the Japanese Lake Suigetsu 'SG06' Sediment Core: Description, Interpretation and Climatic Implications." Tsunami deposits: Saitō Megumi et al., "Suigetsuko bōringu koa o mochiita Tenshō jishin (AD 1586) zengo no kotei taisekibutsu no bunseki."
15 On which, see Thomas M. Cronin, *Paleoclimates: Understanding Climate Change Past and Present*, and Committee on Surface Temperature Reconstructions for the Last 2,000 Years, *Surface Temperature Reconstructions for the Last 2,000 Years*.
16 Sakaguchi, "Warm and Cool Stages."
17 The term "Little Hypsithermal" comes from Yoshino Masatoshi, "Nihon ni okeru rekishi kikōgaku no kadai." Yoshino's point is while the period in question is "medieval" in terms of European historiography, it is "ancient" to historians of Japan.
18 Tagami Yoshio, "Kishō saigai, bōsai kigan to kodai, chūsei no kikō hendō," presents interesting new evidence for droughts in his analysis of prayers for rain.
19 T. Mikami and Y. Tsukamura, "The Climate of Japan in 1816 as Compared with an Extremely Cool Summer Climate in 1783."
20 In English translation, Watsuji Tetsurō, *Climate and Culture: A Philosophical Study*.
21 Yoshinori Yasuda, *Forest and Civilisations*, accurately conveys the character of his thought.
22 An example of the latter claim is Ian Buruma, "A Very Fatalistic Race: How the Japanese Have Always Drawn Strength from Disaster." Note that fatalism is also commonly ascribed to the influence of Buddhism.
23 Stephen R. Kellert, "Japanese Perceptions of Wildlife," disputes the purported love of nature among contemporary Japanese. A nuanced historical critique is provided by Shirane, *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons*, especially 5–9. Regarding fatalism, there is a large and divided literature; one seminal study is David W. Plath, "Japan and the Ethics of Fatalism."
24 Edwin O. Reischauer, *The Japanese Today*, 31–36; John W. Hall, *Government and Local Power in Japan, 500–1700*, 6; W.G. Beasley, *The Japanese Experience*, 1–2.
25 Or, what is the same thing, that periods of state-building and centralization in Japan were sometimes causally associated with foreign threats: Bruce L. Batten, *To the Ends of Japan: Premodern Frontiers, Boundaries, and Interaction*, especially 19–51.
26 Reischauer, *The Japanese Today*, 8; William Wayne Farris, *Japan to 1600: A Social and Economic History*, 3.
27 Several English translations exist, but see the one by Anthony H. Chambers in Haruo Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600*, 624–635.
28 On disasters in Japanese history, a convenient source is Kitahara Itoko, *Nihon saigaishi*.
29 On Kikai and Hashimuregawa, see Gina L. Barnes, "Vulnerable Japan: The Tectonic Setting of Life in the Archipelago," 26–27, 30–32.
30 The examples from this and the previous sentence all come from the plates and essays in Ōtsuka Hatsushige et al., *Shizen kankyō to bunka*.
31 Tatsunori Kawasumi, "Settlement Patterns and Environment of Heijō-kyō, an Ancient Capital City Site in Japan."
32 Fujimoto Tsuyoshi, *Mō futatsu no Nihon bunka: Hokkaidō to Nantō no bunka*.
33 Batten, *To the Ends of Japan*, especially 235–262.
34 Ōbayashi Taryō, *Higashi to nishi, umi to yama*, 18–35; Amino Yoshihiko, *Higashi to nishi ga kataru Nihon no rekishi*.
35 Habu, *Ancient Jomon of Japan*, 26–42.
36 The study of Jōmon population was pioneered by Koyama Shūzō; for a summary, see Habu, *Ancient Jomon of Japan*, 46–50.
37 Sakaguchi, "Warm and Cold Stages," 20–21; Sakaguchi, "Kako 8000 nen," 105–8; Batten, "Climate Change," 41–42.

38 On which, see William Atwell, "Volcanism and Short-Term Climatic Change in East Asian and World History, ca. 1200–1699." As the title indicates, this seminal article covers much more than Japan.
39 Nakatsuka Takeshi, "Kikō hendō to rekishigaku," 56–67.
40 Yoshinari Kawamura, "Late Pleistocene to Holocene Mammalian Faunal Succession in the Japanese Islands, with Comments on the Late Quaternary Extinctions"; Christopher J. Norton et al., "The Nature of Megafaunal Extinctions during the MIS 3–2 Transition in Japan." The most recent research tends to downplay the role of human hunting in Japanese mammalian extinctions: Akira Iwase et al., "Further Study on the Late Pleistocene Megafaunal Extinction in the Japanese Archipelago."
41 On intentionally introduced plants, see Hoshikawa Kiyochika, *Saibai shokubutsu no kigen to denpa*. On invasive weeds, see Asai Yasuhiro, *Midori no shinnyūsha tachi: Kika shokubutsu no hanashi*, 46–49. On livestock and other animals, see Matsui Akira, *Dōbutsu kōkogaku*.
42 Note, however, that population levels were largely static during the Nara and Heian periods, while organizational capabilities may also have temporarily declined as the state became less centralized from Heian times. On population trends, see William Wayne Farris, *Daily Life and Demographics in Ancient Japan*, and *Japan's Medieval Population: Famine, Fertility, and Warfare in a Transformative Age*.
43 On deforestation, see Conrad Totman, *The Green Archipelago: Forestry in Preindustrial Japan*, 9–33, and Totman, *Japan: An Environmental History*, chapters 3–5, *passim*.
44 See Ogura Jun'ichi, *Ezu kara yomitoku hito to keikan no rekishi*.
45 Pollution: Kawasumi, "Settlement Patterns," 49, 54–55.
46 The shift from exploitation to active management is a central theme in Conrad Totman's various books. Resilience is a concept borrowed from ecology; it refers to the ability of a system to resist disturbance. See Brian Walker and David Salt, *Resilience Thinking: Sustaining Ecosystems and People in a Changing World*.
47 Philip C. Brown, "Floods, Drainage, and River Projects in Early Modern Japan: Civil Engineering and the Foundations of Resilience."
48 Osamu Saito, "Climate, Famine, and Population in Japanese History: A Long-Term Perspective." A similar argument, by the way, appears in Geoffrey Parker's recent book, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change & Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century*. Parker claims that Japan was unique among major states in the northern hemisphere in successfully negotiating the climatic challenges of the Little Ice Age. He ascribes Japan's success to demographic factors (initial "underpopulation," and later various negative and positive brakes on fertility) and to good government policy (strong social controls, encouragement of economic growth, and avoidance of costly foreign entanglements).
49 Shizuyo Sano, "Traditional Use of Resources and Management of Littoral Environments at Lake Biwa."
50 K. Takeuchi et al., *Satoyama: The Traditional Rural Landscape of Japan*. Also see Ōtsuka Masahiko, "Sekai no naka de no Nihon no mori to satoyama," and the many chapters on this topic in Yumoto Takakazu, ed., *Shirīzu Nihon rettō no sanman gosen nen*.
51 On public health in Edo, see Susan B. Hanley, *Everyday Things in Premodern Japan: The Forgotten Legacy*, 104–128.
52 Kitō Hiroshi, *Kankyō senshinkoku, Edo*, especially 190–208. Many of the same points are made for Japan as a whole in Hanley, *Everyday Things*, 51–76.
53 Kitō, *Kankyō senshinkoku*, 212–216.
54 On population history in this period, see Kitō Hiroshi, *Jinkō kara yomu Nihon no rekishi*. The static national average disguises significant regional variation.
55 Totman, *The Green Archipelago*.
56 John F. Richards, *The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World*, 148–192; Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, 294–306.
57 Meteorological disasters from the tenth to sixteenth century: Fujiki Hisashi, *Nihon chūsei kishō saigaishi nenpyō kō: 10 kara 16 seiki no kaze, mizu, hideri, chūgai, kyōsaku, kikin, ekibyō no jōhō*. Weather conditions in the eleventh through sixteenth centuries: Mizukoshi Mitsuharu, *Kokiroku ni yoru 11 seiki no tenkō kiroku* and other volumes in the same series (see References for details).
58 Taisaku Komeie, "Landscapes in Literature and Painting," 223–230.
59 See Akihiro Kinda and Kazuhiro Uesugi, "Landscapes and Maps."
60 Also see Komeie, "Landscapes in Literature and Painting," 230–234.
61 See plates 11 and 12 of Matsui Akira, *Kankyō kōkogaku*.
62 Kitahara Itoko et al., *Nihon rekishi kasai jiten*.

63 In addition to the other Japanese works cited in the notes and bibliography, two pioneering books worthy of mention are Iinuma Kenji, *Kankyō rekishigaku to wa nani ka*, and Toyama Shūzō, *Shizen to ningen to no kankeishi*. For a more detailed discussion of the three series mentioned in this paragraph, see Bruce L. Batten and Philip C. Brown, "Introduction: Green Perspectives on the Japanese Past," 10–12.
64 Umehara Takeshi et al., *Kōza: Bunmei to kankyō*. Note that one of the general editors of this series was Yasuda Yoshinari, whose environmental determinism and glorification of pre-agricultural societies find frequent expression throughout.
65 Yumoto, ed., *Shirīzu Nihon rettō no sanman gosen nen*.
66 Hirakawa Minami et al., *Kankyō no Nihonshi*.

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3
Classical Japan and the continent

Douglas S. Fuqua

This chapter reviews historiographical trends regarding Japan's contact with the continent during its classical age—dated from the late sixth or early seventh centuries to the twelfth-century commencement of the medieval era. Most early research on this period focused on Sino-Japanese diplomatic and trade relations, but in the last several decades, more consideration has been given to aspects of Japan's relations with the states on and around the Korean peninsula, as well as to defining Japan's place in the geopolitical, premodern East Asian community.

Japan's classical period corresponded to an age of political change and turmoil in East Asia. The Yamato dynasty began adopting continental practices and institutions to transform itself into a centralized state at the time of Sui (581–618) and Tang (618–907) reunification of China. The Tang, in decline by the mid- to late-ninth century, was replaced by small regional kingdoms for much of the tenth century, until the country was reunited once again by the comparatively weak Song dynasty (960–1279). Closer to home, the Korean peninsula—hitherto divided into the kingdoms of Silla, Paekche, and Koguryŏ—was united for the first time under Silla control in 668 (668–935).[1] Silla was replaced after two and a half centuries by Koryŏ (918–1392), while the kingdom of Parhae (698–926), located to the north of Silla/Koryŏ, suffered defeat at the hands of the Khitan Liao dynasty (907–1125) in 926.

The selective borrowing of continental culture—critical to the development of the early Japanese state and society during the classical age—has been central to the study of continental relations. Immigration and trade with the states of the Korean peninsula accounted for much of this cultural transmission, but the Japanese also conducted diplomatic missions to China, and it is these missions that have received detailed attention from modern Japanese scholars.[2]

The Yamato court began formal dispatch of Chinese missions with the appointment of *kenzuishi* (missions to Sui) from the beginning of the seventh century, followed by *kentōshi* (missions to Tang) from 630 until 838, when the last mission departed from Japan.[3] These missions served an important diplomatic role, providing the means by which the Japanese maintained formal relations with China in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries. They also retrieved elements of Sui and Tang civilization that affected Japan's culture and religion and inspired state centralization and such watershed events as the Taika Reforms and the Taihō *ritsuryō* code.

Scholars working in the late nineteenth century—when Japan faced the threat of Western imperialism—found a historical precedent to the adoption of Western science, technology, and

government institutions in the cultural borrowing of the archaic and classical periods. They focused particular attention on the *kentōshi* missions, which, they posited, were dispatched to a large extent to counter a perceived menace of Tang China, and the argument that Japan had successfully borrowed from an alien culture (i.e., Tang), and did so without losing its identity.[4] This Sino-Japanese focus shaped subsequent study of early Japan's foreign relations.[5]

In the early twentieth century, Kimiya Yasuhiko, Akiyama Kenzō, and Mori Katsumi conducted definitive work on Japan's classical relations with China.[6] Continuing the emphasis on Sino-Japanese relations, these scholars tended to minimize relations with the Korean peninsula. Each produced ground-breaking studies of such issues as the politics involved in planning the *kentōshi* missions, the selection of envoys, and the ships, routes, and maritime technology utilized in making the journeys to and from the continent. They also addressed aspects of trade, including the delivery of official tributary items, goods privately exchanged by mission members, and the beginnings of East Asian merchant activity.[7]

Discussions of Japan's early relations with the continent in early English-language scholarship were, for the most part, broad in scope and located in general historical surveys. Focus was on the transmission of continental (primarily Chinese) culture into Japan and the way in which adoption of continental systems, culture, learning, and religion shaped the first unified Japanese state.

Scholars differed, however, in their interpretation of Japan's outreach to the mainland. George Sansom, for instance, saw the borrowing of Chinese culture as a reaction to Chinese superiority, while John Whitney Hall viewed indigenous Yamato culture and its sixth-century social base as fundamental to the way in which Japanese leaders dealt with the continent. Hall contended that Japanese leaders, after witnessing the success of the Sui and Tang in reuniting China, chose to emulate the Chinese model to extend their hegemony and reduce the threat of rival clans. Edwin Reischauer and Albert Craig, on the other hand, inspired by Modernization theory, set out to discover the historical and cultural conditions that laid the foundation to Japan's successful, twentieth-century modernization. Like Hall, they emphasized Japan's active and voluntary adoption of mainland culture, but stressed that the Japanese uniquely and independently developed their culture due to geographic remoteness, and did so without threat to their own traditions. Reischauer and Craig argued that the Japanese systematically chose institutional base elements, thereby refining a central government that was more streamlined and logical than its Chinese counterpart. They went beyond Sansom and Hall in emphasizing the Korean role in the transportation of mainland influences, pointing to the acceptance of Buddhism from Korea as having ushered in a new age of borrowing.[8]

Reischauer was the first Western scholar to contribute more focused studies that addressed, at least in part, the *kentōshi* and Tang diplomatic and cultural exchange with two publications on Ennin, a Tendai monk who accompanied the 838 *kentōshi* to China and then returned to Japan on a Korean vessel after nearly a decade of study. Reischauer's work included background information about Ennin, travel in Tang China, and the protocol of contemporary East Asian diplomatic relations. He described the *kentōshi* as a means by which the Japanese "civilized" themselves. Envoys brought knowledge that, in Reischauer's words, "rapidly [changed] Japan from a remote barbarian land into an integral part of the civilized world."[9]

Reischauer's translation of Ennin's diary and his accompanying scholarship was praised for explicating ninth-century Japanese attitudes toward the Chinese and their culture. He redefined the historiographical approach to classical Japan by encouraging the use of journals and personal accounts in historical examination. His work was, however, criticized for his use of the comparative method of historical analysis, such as comparisons between Ennin and Marco Polo.[10]

Another quarter century passed before notable Western-language contributions by Robert Borgen, Inoue Mitsusada, and Charlotte von Verschuer were added to the field of Sino-Japanese

relations. Inspired by the research of Kimiya Yasuhiko and Mori Katsumi, Borgen's "The Japanese Mission to China, 801–806," detailed the penultimate Japanese *kentōshi* embassy, which counted among its members the Buddhist priests Kūkai and Saichō. Borgen described preparations for the send-off, difficulties of the voyages, the journey to Chang'an, and the subsequent audience with the Chinese emperor. Inoue recounted a 632 Tang mission to Japan, which came by way of Silla and included among its members several Japanese who had studied culture and bureaucratic structure in China for decades, and Verschuer provided the first comprehensive Western-language study of the *kentōshi* diplomatic exchange—a review of not one, but all key eighth- and ninth-century missions.[11] Significantly, Verschuer concluded that the *kentōshi* made possible the acquisition of Chinese knowledge by transporting Chinese books. This was in contrast to the findings of others, who emphasized the contributions of individuals—craftsmen, artisans, scholars, and monks—who accompanied the missions and brought back new expertise to Japan.[12]

Missions to China

The *kenzuishi* era was short, comprising less than two decades, and these missions have not received the focus given the *kentōshi* missions, which were dispatched over a period of two centuries. Most historians divide the *kentōshi* age into three periods—Early, Middle, and Late—which they base on changes in sea routes and the size of the missions dispatched. The Early period (630–669) comprises missions of one or two vessels that followed a northern route along the western coast of the Korean peninsula—the same route followed by the preceding *kenzuishi* vessels. The Middle (702–759) and Late (777–838) periods were characterized by the dispatch of larger missions—usually comprising four vessels—which transported as many as 500–650 individuals. Middle-period missions followed a "southern island route"—first described by Mori and Kimiya—that ran from Hakata Bay, to Hiradō island, and then to the south along the shores of Satsuma and numerous southern islands before turning east across the East China Sea toward the Yangzi River delta.[13] Late *kentōshi* period voyages sailed along what is referred to as a "southern route," running from Hakata Bay to the Gotō islands, where ships awaited winds that carried them directly across open sea toward China.[14]

A few scholars reject a maritime route-defined periodization for the *kentōshi* age, and have proposed a two-part periodization, one that comprises only Early and Late periods. Ishii Masatoshi suggested these periods be distinguished by primary objectives. His first coincides with an era of disorder and upheaval on the Korean peninsula. He posits these missions were political in purpose. In contrast, his Late period, dated from 702, is characterized by relative East Asian stability, suggesting importation of culture as the primary mission goal.[15] Wang Yong also argues for a two-part division, albeit one based on mission scale—smaller two-vessel, Early (630–669) missions followed by larger four-vessel, Late (702–838) missions.[16]

There is still no consensus regarding the number of formal diplomatic missions conducted, or even how an official mission should be defined.[17] The *Nihon shoki* records three *kenzuishi* missions for 607, 608, and 614, while Chinese sources describe a fourth for 600 and possibly two more, one dispatched in 608 (the second for that year), and the other in 610. And in the case of the *kentōshi*, while most scholars generally acknowledge eighteen or nineteen missions, some have accepted as few as twelve or thirteen, while others, especially within the last three decades, have added a 667 mission that was originally omitted from consideration because it was sent to accompany the Tang envoy, Sima Fating, back to China, and only traveled as far as Paekche.[18]

Of greater consequence has been a scholarly debate regarding why Japan ended its missions to China in the ninth century without establishing relations with Song China in the tenth.[19] The last

mission was planned in 894, but the ambassador, Sugawara Michizane (845–903), petitioned the court to cancel the mission due to unsafe travel conditions in China. The Japanese planned no further missions, even after the establishment of the Song dynasty.

While it is true that Tang was in decline (it fell in 907), most scholars have found Michizane's petition insufficient for explaining why the *kentōshi* were ended and never resumed. Other factors must have played a role in the decision.

Early twentieth-century scholars argued, for instance, that the ninth-century court had learned all it needed from China, rendering continued diplomacy unnecessary. This explanation served, perhaps, as an edifying historical lesson for modern Japan as it turned from the West before World War II. Even after the war, however, Japanese scholars continued insisting that Japan purposefully freed itself from Chinese influences in the ninth century and chose to enter a period of relative isolation.[20]

In recent decades some historians have suggested that tensions between Japan and the peninsula dissipated for the most part by the first half of the ninth century, rendering official *kentōshi* diplomacy unnecessary. Others point to increasing ill ease on the part of the court in taking a subordinate position to China as a tributary state (see the tributary discussion below). They note that the time passed between the dispatching of missions increased after the turn of the ninth century. Between 630 and 752, nine of eleven *kentōshi* were appointed within fifteen years or less after the preceding mission, but more than thirty years passed between the departures of the last two *kentōshi* missions (803/804 and 836), and nearly sixty years passed before the last mission (Sugawara Michizane's canceled mission) was appointed in 894.

Interestingly, Japan was not the only country tapering off and eventually ending its diplomatic missions to Tang during this period. During the 137-year span between 619 and 756, 125 tributary missions were dispatched to Tang from kingdoms in Southeast Asia. Over the next 150 years, however, only twenty missions were sent from these same kingdoms—despite the fact that trade with Southeast Asia steadily increased.[21]

Borgen summarized the most prominent reasons for the abandonment of missions to China proffered by historians in the postwar era as: (1) the exorbitant expenditures paid out by the court to dispatch these missions; (2) safety concerns in the wake of Tang's decline; and (3) the growth of an East Asian trade, which made exotic goods available and *kentōshi* trade unnecessary, and facilitated an alternative means of transport of Buddhist monks to China. Borgen also posited that the Japanese became increasingly uncomfortable assuming a subservient position to China, and therefore found it fortuitous when their relationship with Parhae rendered direct exchange with Tang China unnecessary. Maintaining the Parhae relationship meant the Japanese could remain a part of the East Asian diplomatic community and stay abreast of Chinese political and intellectual developments without need for diplomatic contact with Tang.[22]

Any of the factors above could have contributed to the cancelation of official *kentōshi* missions at the end of the ninth century. Interestingly, a number of scholars now suggest the court canceled the 894 mission without intending to end the missions permanently. In this scenario, semi-isolationism only became de facto policy in the tenth century because of fear of foreign and pirate attacks, as well as out of economic concerns.[23]

Diplomatic status with China

Another important topic, undertaken by Japanese and non-Japanese scholars alike, concerns the diplomatic stance the Japanese court took in its official dealings with Sui and Tang, and in particular, whether Japanese leaders acknowledged that they were in a tributary—and therefore submissive—relationship to the Chinese court. Scholars have made much of correspondence the

Yamato court sent to the Sui emperor in the first decade of the seventh century—a famous letter from the Japanese monarch, Suiko (r. 592–628), to the Sui emperor, Yangdi (r. 604–618), which began with the phrase, "The Child of Heaven of the land where the sun rises sends a message to the Child of Heaven of the land where the sun sets."[24] Yangdi found the letter lacking in propriety, and expressed great displeasure at Suiko's use of a title seemingly equivalent to his own.

Japanese researchers have cited the Suiko letter to conclude that Japan was asserting equality in its dealings with Tang.[25] Accordingly, historians argue the Japanese court and their envoys avoided the appearance of submission to the Chinese by eschewing tributary protocol. The court either sent no further state letters to avoid expressions of obsequiousness toward the Chinese emperor, or it prepared and sent subsequent letters—now lost to history—that were intentionally ambiguous, avoiding both language offensive to the Chinese and demeaning to the standing of their own sovereign.[26] Only in recent decades has anyone considered the possibility that the Japanese leadership knowingly, if not reluctantly, accepted a subordinate, tributary position vis-à-vis the Chinese.[27]

Western scholars tend to concur with their Japanese colleagues that the Japanese court resisted oaths of fealty to Chinese regimes. As evidence, Borgen cites the mission of 801–806, which refused to acknowledge subservience to the Chinese officials when it landed on Chinese shores. He speculated, however, that the Japanese envoys probably assumed a more humble stance in China than the one authorized by the Japanese court—not to do so would have impeded retrieval of Chinese knowledge and material goods.[28] Verschuer also believes that Japanese sovereigns saw themselves as equal in status to Chinese emperors, but has argued that Japan nevertheless accepted tributary status, creating a paradox wherein the Japanese did not always follow accepted Chinese protocol.[29] Wang Zhenping has reinvigorated this discussion by encouraging us to question common assumptions regarding the *kentōshi* exchange.[30] He asks us to reconsider the nature of the *sakuhō taisei* (investiture) and the tributary systems. The traditional *sakuhō taisei* theory, which gained popularity in Japan in the 1960s, viewed classical Japan's international relations in terms of a China-centered world order in which the Japanese sought recognition and titles from the Chinese court.[31] This paradigm, however, pertains to the period before the establishment of the centralized Japanese state. By the turn of the seventh-century, *kenzuishi* were dispatched as part of the tributary system; and while most scholars place China at the summit of this system as well, Wang contends that conceptualizing China at the apex of the tributary order is simplistic. He posits tributary relations between China and Japan were, in fact, mutually beneficial, and describes Japan/Tang relations as part of a multi-polar international system, wherein Tang was less than the dominant power it (or we) imagined itself to be.[32] Wang concludes that the Japanese manipulated state letters that superficially acknowledged Chinese superiority, and did so without demeaning their own sovereign. The ambiguity of these letters satisfied both courts; and the *kentōshi* provided only lip service to necessary tributary etiquette. While Wang does not offer a new perspective on how the Japanese court perceived its own status vis-à-vis China, his research has encouraged scholars to rethink the nature of Sino-Japanese exchange.

Beyond Sino-Japanese relations

As discussed above, a paradigm developed that encouraged historians to focus on Sino-Japanese relations and give secondary consideration to relations with non-Chinese states. Prior to World War II, Japanese scholars understood early relations with the Korean states and Parhae in terms of Japan's emerging nineteenth- and twentieth-century military power and control of the Korean peninsula and Manchuria. They accepted *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* tales of Japanese military might as fact.[33] After the war, newly gained academic freedoms, new archaeological discoveries, and the

work of non-Japanese scholars—especially those in Korea—encouraged Japanese historians to question prewar conceptions and reevaluate Japan's relationships with China and Korea.[34] By the last two decades of the twentieth century, scholars—both Japanese and non-Japanese—had set aside prewar perspectives, directing new focus on the Japanese court's relations with non-Chinese peoples and the states of Paekche, Silla, Koguryŏ, and Parhae.[35] Today few, if any, scholars, accept the *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki* accounts as literal truth, although many do still insist that Japan existed as a fairly powerful state from the fourth through sixth century.

Scholarly focus on the Japan–Silla relationship includes research into the thirty-three missions sent to Silla from Japan between 668 and 882, and the forty-eight missions sent to Japan from Silla until 803.[36] Relations soured between Japan and Silla after the 663 Battle of Paekchon River, but formal exchange was soon reinstated, out of a mutual fear of invasion from Tang. Relations grew quite close, at least until 735, when the Japanese court turned away a Sillan envoy, Kim Sang Chŏng, for referring to his country as an imperial state.[37]

Work on diplomatic relations between Japan and Parhae has also been fruitful. Ueda Takeshi and Son Eiken, for instance, examined this relationship in the context of East Asian geopolitics, providing detailed historical background to more than four dozen missions dispatched between Parhae and Japan. They focused on the vessels, maritime skills, and routes utilized in crossing the Sea of Japan.[38]

Japanese scholars have also explored relations with peoples along the periphery of the Yamato/Japan state. Suzuki Yasutami and Yamazato Jun'ichi, for instance, each investigated Japan's trade with the southern islands from the early seventh century, while Mori Kimiyuki described Japan's relations with the people known as Tanra, who occupied Cheju island. Also of significance was Sakayori Masashi's research on exchanges with the Mohe, an ethnic group that likely lived north of Parhae until at least the ninth century.[39]

English-language scholarship on Japan's foreign relations with states and entities other than China is not as rich as that published in Japanese, but significant contributions have been made. These include a paper by Aleksei Okladnikov, a Soviet archaeologist who referenced Chinese source materials—some in Russian translation—to conduct the first Japan-Parhae-Mohe study available in English; works by Borgen and William McCullough, each of whom offered valuable historical and thematic background for Japan-Parhae studies; and Inoue, who focused on seventh-century relationships with Paekche and Koguryŏ before the fall of these states in the 660s. Both Verschuer's *Across the Perilous Seas* and Bruce Batten's *Gateway to Japan* offer comprehensive, English-language research regarding Japan's overall diplomatic and economic relations with both China and non-Chinese states from the classical to the early medieval periods.[40]

Japan in the East Asian community

Scholarly consensus concerning Japan's diplomatic status vis-à-vis non-Chinese states has also changed in recent decades. Based on literal readings of Japanese primary sources that described Paekche, Silla, Koguryŏ, Parhae, and the southern islands as tributary neighbors, earlier historians commonly attributed to the Japanese state primacy within its immediate geopolitical region. This was especially true of the eighth century, when, the sources tell us, the Japanese greeted embassies from Silla and Parhae as representatives of subordinate states. Accordingly, historians maintained that classical-period Japan regarded its neighbors as part of its own, multi-ethnic, "small empire" (*tōi no shōteikoku*), which also included the Emishi and the people of the southern islands.[41]

The stance the Japanese court took in its official dealings with the non-Chinese states has, however, become subject to debate. While most historians still accept the premise that the

Yamato Japanese state envisioned itself superior to its Korean neighbors, many now note that there is insufficient evidence to indicate that Silla, Paekche, Koguryŏ, or Parhae, ever concurred, and several have expressed skepticism concerning the likelihood that they did.[42]

Issues of trade

Work on classical Japan's foreign relations includes a great wealth of scholarship regarding trade relations. Kimiya, Akiyama, and Mori Katsumi laid the groundwork for the investigation of a maritime East Asian trade that developed around the time the *kentōshi* missions ended. *Kenzuishi* and *kentōshi* carried special goods to the Sui and Tang courts, which reciprocated with gifts of their own that were received as luxury items at the Japanese court. In addition to this court-to-court exchange, members of the Japanese embassies became involved in trade of their own. Embassy personnel were awarded travel stipends from the Japanese court to pay for their long trips to China. These stipends were meant to cover travel, as well as room and board expenses, but since the Chinese court usually paid a foreign mission's expenses while it remained inside the country, scholars have speculated that the Japanese used some, if not most, of their stipends to engage in the exchange of private goods—most likely trading raw materials and a variety of silk textiles for Chinese books, musical instruments, religious writings, and Buddhist images.[43] While there is no clear mention of private trade conducted by *kenzuishi* or *kentōshi* members in Japanese primary texts, Chinese texts do describe the purchase of many written works by the ambassador of the Japanese mission of 702.[44] There are also descriptions, in the Japanese primary sources, of Parhae envoys heavily involved in trade while in Japan.

Kenzuishi and *kentōshi* trade is believed to have served as catalyst for the emergence of an East Asian trade network. It stimulated a demand among the Japanese aristocracy for Chinese products—a demand that became particularly pronounced by the beginning of the Heian period when a private merchant trade with the continent became prominent. There has been some uncertainty regarding who these traders were. Private merchants did not receive official recognition on behalf of any government, and as a result, the primary sources are somewhat vague with regard to ethnicities. Japanese primary sources do refer to some merchants by national origin (e.g., "Chinese traders"), but there is debate regarding the accuracy of these references. The sources also utilized vague, general terms, such as *minkan shōnin* or "private traders."[45]

Edwin Reischauer was perhaps the first Western scholar to address the issue of the East Asian trade, arguing that the "Chinese" merchants mentioned in Japanese primary sources were, in fact, Sillans, possibly from trading communities situated along the southern coast of the Shandong peninsula and lower stretches of the Huai River. Reischauer introduced the role these Koreans played as sailors and traders in ninth-century East Asian commerce to the historical discussion, and he provided descriptions of the sea routes mariners traveled between Japan and China during the eighth and ninth centuries.[46]

In the last several decades, an increasing number of scholars of the East Asian trade have tackled issues of private and commercial exchange and the role East Asian merchants played in foreign relations. Wu Ling, for instance, provided important Japanese-language discussion of this East Asian trade, noting, as Reischauer had, the importance of Sillans in the East Asian trading network. Even Chinese merchants, for instance, traveled on Sillan ships before making the journey to Japan on their own vessels by the middle of the ninth century.[47]

Similarly, Bruce Batten explored issues of tribute and private trade during the classical age, noting that private trade became more prominent at times when the Heian state was weak. Koyama Yasunori, moreover, addressed aspects of Chinese trade with Japan from the tenth century, including descriptions of tenth- and eleventh-century Japanese aristocrats who acquired

Chinese luxury goods, and of Japanese merchants who traveled abroad in the eleventh century. Koyama found that Japan became an intricate part of the East Asian trading sphere, despite its eventual withdrawal from the East Asian diplomatic world. And William McCullough described the way in which Taira Kiyomori's Ise Taira profited from foreign commerce with the Song during the late twelfth century.[48]

In 1988, Verschuer produced the first comprehensive, Western-language study of premodern Japan's trading relations with the continent, cataloging the products traded during the Heian period as a result of the Japanese aristocracy's demand for mainland goods, and describing the continental demand for Japanese goods, such as horns and paper. She wrote that China played a dominant role in East Asia with respect to trade by imposing its own model of trade upon its neighbors until the tenth century, when the Song and Yuan dynasties adopted a policy of free trade.[49]

What is meant by "Japan?"

From the 1980s, a trend toward questioning the meaning of national identity and national boundaries arose in Japanese historical studies, leading scholars to redefine premodern Japan as a geopolitical state. Today's Japanese polity is a much larger geographical entity than the Yamato confederacy of the sixth and seventh centuries or the Nara or Heian states. Historians now use "Japan" and "Japanese" with greater caution when conceptualizing the past. They have begun to recognize the classical-period archipelago as multiethnic and host to polities other than the one centered in Nara and Kyoto.

This has influenced our understanding of classical relations and the degree to which the Japanese polity may have been isolated from the continent. Japan's past was often conceptualized in terms of its geographic remoteness from the continent—as such, the seas were described as a great divider, not a conduit for contact and exchange. Batten notes a recent paradigm shift in Japan regarding history vis-à-vis geography thanks to Amino Yoshihiko.[50] Amino and others, including historian Gari Ledyard and archaeologist Mori Kōichi, have suggested that the sea not be defined as a barrier, but rather as a conduit facilitating contact between the archipelago and continent. Ledyard even proposed the existence of a *wa* "thalassocracy," writing that the Yayoi culture "was essentially an area connected by water, not by land, and one of the most common scenes must have been people going back and forth in their boats."[51]

Moreover, Heian-period Japanese mariners were assumed inept, lacking the fundamental maritime skills necessary to successfully traverse the seas between Japan and China. Mori Katsumi, Sudō Toshiichi, Mozai Torao, and Sugiyama Hiroshi are among notable historians who suggested that the *kentōshi* navigators lacked knowledge of the seasonal winds and currents. Reischauer too, suggested Japanese sailors sailed at the mercy of the wind and sea, while Borgen described Japan's poor shipbuilding skills and primitive boating practices (e.g., use of large numbers of oarsmen due to lack of keel operational knowledge) as factors that hampered Japan's exchanges with China.[52]

Kentōshi maritime disasters are, in point of fact, described in much detail in primary sources, such as a *Shoku Nihongi* account of the 777 mission's disastrous return voyage, when one of the mission's ships was torn apart during a storm.[53] This and other accounts reinforced the assumption that the Japanese were relatively isolated from the continent, at least from their own side. Nevertheless, although Middle- and Late-period *kentōshi* disasters at sea are well-documented, it should not be forgotten that *kenzuishi* and Early-period *kentōshi* ships followed a route along the Korean coast that met with considerable maritime success. Sailing to China by way of the Korean peninsula was not arduous; the Japanese were experienced with coastal sailing and sailing to and from the Korean peninsula long before the start of the classical age.

Recently scholars have even begun to question the assumption of Middle- and Late-period *kentōshi* maritime ineptitude. Tōno Haruyuki, for instance, posits that the *kentōshi* Middle- and Late-period sailors were very much aware of the seasonal winds and currents. He argues, however, that from at least the beginning of the eighth century, Japanese envoys felt obliged to set sail at dangerous times of the year in order to present tribute in China during the Lunar New Year's celebrations, the traditional time to pay homage to the Tang emperor. If his thesis is correct, the Japanese mariners were aware of the dangers from typhoons and storms, but set sail anyway at inopportune times to arrive in the Tang capital for the New Year celebrations.[54]

Batten addressed the degree to which the Japanese may have been isolated from the continent by applying world-systems theory to analyze the degree of interaction premodern Japan experienced with its neighbors. He found that Japan was never isolated from the continent or other parts of the archipelago, but rather, embedded in a world system in terms of military, political, and cultural relations. The question of Japanese isolation has also been addressed, albeit indirectly, by an important study by Wayne Farris, who applied William H. McNeill's model of epidemics to Japan.[55] McNeill had hypothesized that classical Japan's geographic isolation from the continent insulated it from regular exposure to certain diseases, leaving the Japanese population unable to achieve disease immunity and vulnerable to epidemics brought through maritime contacts. Farris contends that the Great Smallpox Epidemic of 735–737 fits the pattern of McNeill's hypothesis.[56] He suggests the activities of Sillan traders and travelers were likely responsible for the transmission of this disease into Kyushu, but concludes that, because there is no record of a similar outbreak on the continent for these same years, the Japanese were isolated to a certain degree, at least enough to prevent the population from achieving disease immunity.

Primary sources and material culture

Historians of classical-period foreign relations have a number of standard primary sources at their disposal. The books of the *Rikkokushi* (*Six National Histories of Japan*) record diplomatic exchanges with Sui and Tang China, Silla, Parhae, and the Tanra, as well as with the seventh-century Emishi, Hayato (in southern Kyushu), and peoples from the Ryukyu islands.[57] The *Rikkokushi* also record elements of trade conducted by Sillan and Tang merchants coming to Japan.

The *Engishiki* and *Ruijū sandai kyaku* offer important accounts of trade. The former, a collection of court regulations compiled in the tenth century, provides the names and quantity of items given to the sovereigns of Tang, Silla, and Parhae, including, for instance, the type and quantity of gifts presented in Japan to a Tang envoy as gifts to bestow upon the Chinese emperor. *Ruijū sandai kyaku* describes details of transactions administered when Sillan merchants arrived in Japan to trade. It tells us, for example, that private individuals bartered for goods under the supervision of the Dazaifu official.[58] One of the most important sources for trade-related research is the *Baishirage no motsuge*, which documents a trade between the Japanese aristocracy and members of an official Sillan mission attending the 752 consecration ceremony at the Tōdaiji temple.[59]

Fortunately, valuable new compilations of scattered primary sources concerning Japanese diplomatic and commercial exchange have been made available to scholars since the late twentieth century. Two of the most important are *Kentōshi kenkyū to shiryō* by Mozai Torao, Nishijima Sadao, Tanaka Takeo, and Ishii Masatoshi, and Tajima Isao's *Nihon – Chūgoku – Chōsen taigai kōryūshi nenpyō*. The former provides excerpts of primary sources concerning the *kentōshi*, while the latter is a collection of passages taken from primary sources—in modern Japanese translation—that reference overseas contact and exchange of goods between Japan, China, and Korea from 697 to 1185. A third, and even more comprehensive, publication, *Taigai kankeishi sōgō nenpyō*, indexes all

Japanese and overseas primary sources concerning external exchange from the archaic period to the nineteenth century. Prepared by nearly three dozen Japanese scholars, this work compiles all references to the Japanese archipelago's relations with foreign states.

Archaeology also supplements our understanding of Japanese relations with the continent. We know from excavations throughout Japan that Chinese ceramic ware was in great demand during the classical era. Yue celadon, for instance, produced primarily in Zhejiang, China, made an appearance in Japan at about the time that Sugawara Michizane petitioned the court to halt the last mission to Tang, giving us a better understanding of the nature of late ninth-century, private trade. The archaeological record also suggests that, by the ninth century, Tang ceramics were used by increasingly diverse strata of society. Further archaeological discovery is certain to contribute more to our understanding of classical Japan's ties to the continent.

Further research

As the foregoing discussion shows, most English-language scholarship on relations between Japan and the continent has focused upon issues such as the adoption of continental culture from the seventh century, the official missions dispatched to China from the seventh to the ninth centuries, the way in which Japan saw itself in the Chinese tributary order as well as in a diplomatic order of its own, and aspects of a merchant trade that developed from the ninth century. To date, detailed discussion of tenth- to twelfth-century relations with the continent—that is, after the cessation of the *kentōshi*—remains sparse in English-language publications. Notable exceptions are the works of Robert Borgen, Charlotte von Verschuer, and Bruce Batten, as well as William McCullough's 1999 study, which, among other issues, offers additional insight into Japanese contact with the small, short-lived state of Wuyue (907–978).

Scholars have tried to understand the primary goals for the *kenzuishi* and *kentōshi* missions, asking to what extent they may have been diplomatic and political in nature—particularly in response to political developments on the Korean peninsula and in China—or dispatched with the primary goal of retrieving continental culture. Scholars have also devoted much attention to an East Asian trade network that developed from at least the ninth century. More work is needed, however, to understand Sino-Japanese relations in light of China's relations with its other neighbors. Why, for instance, did Southeast Asian diplomatic missions to Tang decrease at approximately the same time Japan was ending its own missions? Further comparative research of international diplomacy could prove fruitful.

Related to this, further work is needed regarding Japan's geopolitical relationships and position within the East Asian community during the latter centuries of the classical age. This research should reference recent studies already published in Japanese while addressing greater aspects of Japan's relations and exchanges with the Song, Koryŏ, the Liao dynasty, the southern islands, and other ethnic groups and peoples located on the continent or to the north of Japan.

Notes

1 From at least the fourth to the mid-sixth centuries—a confederation known as Kaya (Jpn: *Mimana*) also occupied a small part of the southern Korean peninsula.
2 Diplomatic trade missions to China date to as early as the first century, but they were sporadic, especially after the fall of the Latter Han dynasty. Chinese political instability until the end of the sixth century left the evolving Yamato court without a clear Chinese partner, and as a result, exchange of embassies with the Korean states of Paekche and Silla became more crucial to the Yamato court.
3 An additional mission was appointed in 894, but was soon canceled.
4 See Lee Sungsi, *Higashi ajia no ōken to kōeki*, 12–14, for further discussion.

5 The classical and Meiji period have been characterized as the only two occasions when Japan extensively and purposefully adopted from the outside. See, for instance, Inoue Mitsusada, "The Century of Reform," 163–165.
6 Kimiya Yasuhiko, *Nisshi kōtsūshi*; Akiyama Kenzō, *Nisshi kōshōshi kenkyū*; Mori Katsumi, *Kentōshi*. (See also Kurita Mototsugu, *Nara jidai no tokusei*).
7 A short list of prominent Japanese, Korean, and Chinese *kentōshi* scholars includes Ishii Masatoshi ("Kentōshi"), Masamura Hiroshi (*Kentōshi no kenkyū*), Tōno Haruyuki (*Kentōshi to shōsōin*), Lee Sungsi (*Higashi ajia no ōken to kōeki*), Mori Kimiyuki (*Kodai nihon no taigai ninshiki to tsūkō*), Wang Yong (*Tō kara mita kentōshi*), and Ueda Takeshi (*Kentōshi zenkōkai*). Kegasawa Yasunori has produced a detailed study of the *kenzuishi* (*Kenzuishi ga mita fūkei—higashi ajia kara no shinshiten*).
8 George B. Sansom, "Early Japanese Law and Administration"; *A History of Japan to 1334*; and *Japan: A Short Cultural History*; John Whitney Hall, *Government and Local Power in Japan, 500–1700: A Study Based on Bizen Province*; Edwin O. Reischauer and Albert M. Craig, *Japan: Traditions and Transformation*.
9 Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*; and *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*. The first is an annotated translation of Ennin's diary—supplemented with nearly 1600 footnotes. The second release, a companion to the translation, retold the story from the third-person point of view, with added historical context. The quoted passage is from *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, 39–40.
10 See reviews by E.G. Pulleyblank (in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*) and George Sansom (in *Pacific Affairs*).
11 Inoue, "The Century of Reform"; Charlotte von Verschuer, *Les relations officielles du Japon avec la Chine aux VIIIe et IXe siècles*.
12 The influence of these individuals would have been especially pronounced during the seventh century. Verschuer's study begins with the eighth.
13 Sugiyama Hiroshi ("Kentōshi no kōro ni tsuite," 36) doubts the southern island route was plotted, suggesting rather that vessels following this route simply drifted at the mercy of the seas.
14 For more information regarding *kentōshi* periodization, see Fuqua, "The Japanese Missions to Tang China and Maritime Exchange in East Asia, 7th–9th Centuries," 22–33.
15 Ishii Masatoshi, "Kentōshi Q&A," 260–261. Over-emphasizing the political nature of the Early-period missions is problematic, in that it understates the significance of seventh-century cultural importation. These seventh-century missions introduced elements of Chinese civilization that profoundly affected Japan's government, economics, culture, and religion.
16 Wang Yong, *Tō kara mita kentōshi*, 27.
17 Primary sources are part of the problem. Envoys dispatched to Tang are referred variously as *kentōshi* (the standard used by scholars today), *nishi no michi no tsukai, nittōshi, heitōshi*, and *chōkōshi*. For more on defining *kentōshi* missions, see Fuqua, "The Japanese Missions to Tang China and Maritime Exchange in East Asia, 7th–9th Centuries," 121–127.
18 Wang (*Tō kara mita kentōshi*, 25–26) summarized the positions of prominent scholars regarding what constituted a *kentōshi* mission. Kegasawa Yasunori (*Kenzuishi ga mita fūkei—higashi ajia kara no shinshiten*, 31–42) did the same for *kenzuishi* scholarship by summarizing the views of thirteen prominent scholars who approached the authenticity of *kenzuishi*-related primary sources in differing ways. See also Tōno, *Kentōshi ga mita chūgoku bunka*, 84.
19 Summaries of the debate appear in Charlotte von Verschuer, "Looking from Within and Without," and Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane*. Koyama Yasunori ("East and West in the Late Classical Age," 372) reminds us that the Japanese did not attempt to establish relations with Koryŏ in the tenth century either.
20 Mori Katsumi was one such scholar, although he acknowledged that Japanese enthusiasm for Chinese goods did not wane (*Kentōshi*, 187–198). See also Inoue Mitsusada, *Introduction to Japanese History: Before the Meiji Restoration*. For further discussion, see von Verschuer, "Looking from Within and Without: Ancient and Medieval External Relations."
21 Kamei Meitoku, *Nihon bōeki tōjiji no kenkyū*, 25.
22 Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*; his summary of reasons behind the halt of diplomatic missions appears on pp. 246–247. Ivan Morris (*The World of the Shining Prince*, 19) discusses the theory that Michizane was in a power struggle with members of the Fujiwara and feared loss of position if he left for China. This theory is not commonly supported today.
23 See, for instance, Robert Borgen, "Jōjin's Travels from Center to Center," 384–413, and William H. McCullough, "The Heian Court, 794–1070," 20–96.
24 Translation by McCullough, "The Heian Court, 794–1070," 83.
25 Including Kimiya Yasuhiko, Mori Katsumi, and Nishijima Sadao.

26 Suematsu ("Japan Relations with the Asian Continent and the Korean Peninsula (Before 950 A.D.)," 681–684) is one example of a scholar who argued that criticism from the Sui Emperor caused the Japanese to eschew writing additional letters, relying instead on oral greetings. See also Kimiya Yasuhiko, *Nikka bunka kōryūshi*; Mori Katsumi, *Kentōshi*; and Nishijima Sadao, "Nana, hasseiki no higashi ajia kokusai kankei." Wang Zhenping (*Ambassadors from the Islands of Immortals*) was the first to hypothesize that the Japanese continued to prepare state letters that they kept ambiguous.
27 See, for instance, Tōno Haruyuki, "Kentōshisen no kōzō to kōkaijutsu," 9 and *Kentōshi to shōsōin*, 15.
28 Robert Borgen, "The Japanese Mission to China, 801–806," 11–14.
29 Charlotte von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea: Japanese Trade with China and Korea from the Seventh to the Sixteenth Centuries*, 4.
30 See Wang Zhenping, "Speaking with a Forked Tongue: Diplomatic Correspondence between China and Japan 238–608," 23–32; and *Ambassadors from the Islands of the Immortals*, 1–2.
31 For more information, see Nishijima Sadao's *sakuhō* system theory as discussed in *Chūgoku kodai kokka to higashi Ajia sekai*, and the introduction to Tanaka Fumio's *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon*. In English, see Kitō Kiyoaki, "International Relations in Ancient East Asia," 2–6; Charles Holcombe also addresses the issue of the *sakuhō* system in *The Genesis of East Asia: 221 BC – AD 907*, 53–60.
32 Wang Zhenping, *Tang China in Multi-polar Asia: A History of Diplomacy and War*.
33 Faith in the veracity of the early Japanese primary sources also affected the Western historical narrative. See, for instance, David Murray, *Japan* and James Murdoch, *A History of Japan: From the Origins to the Arrival of the Portuguese in 1542 A.D.*
34 von Verschuer, "Looking from Within and Without," 538–540.
35 Important new studies of Japan's relations with non-Chinese states include contributions by Ishii Masatoshi (*Nihon-bokkai kankeishi no kenkyū*), Suzuki Yasutami (*Nihon kodai no shūenshi*), and Sakayori Masashi (*Bokkai to kodai no nihon*), each of whom researched Japan's diplomatic relations with one or more of the states of Paekche, Silla, Koguryŏ, and Parhae. For an archaeological perspective on exchanges between Japan, Koguryŏ, and Parhae, see articles by Korean sociologists translated into Japanese in Association of Korean Sociologists, *Kōkuri, Bokkai to kodai Nihon*. See also Yanagida Yoshitaka (*Kyūshū shinpojiumu: ima kōrokan ga yomigaeru*) and Arano Yasunori, Ishii Masatoshi, and Murai Shōsuke's *Nihon no taigai kankei 2: Tsūkō, tsūshōen no kakudai* and *Nihon no taigai kankei 3: Tsūkō, tsūshōen no kakudai*.
36 Ishii Masatoshi, "Shiragi to Bokkai," 162–165; Yanagida Yoshitaka et al., *Kyūshū shinpojiumu: ima kōrokan ga yomigaeru*, 74–75; Tajima Isao, *Nihon, Chūgoku, Chōsen taigai kōryūshi nenpyō*, 14–15.
37 Tajima Isao, *Nihon, Chūgoku, Chōsen taigai kōryūshi nenpyō*, 10.
38 Ueda Takeshi and Son Eiken, *Nihon Bokkai kōshōshi*. Sakayori Masashi and Ishii Masatoshi have also each made substantive contributions to the field of Japan–Parhae studies with books published in 2001. Sakayori's *Bokkai to kodai no Nihon* included a useful summary of the scholarship already conducted in the field of Parhae studies, while in *Nihon-Bokkai kankeishi no kenkyū*, Ishii summarized the problems facing the Parhae scholars of today, explicating issues of multilateral relations between Parhae, Japan, and its Korean neighbors.
39 Suzuki Yasutami, "Nantōjin no raichō wo meguru kisoteki kōsatsu" and *Kodai ezo no sekai to kōryū, kodai ouken to kōryū*; Yamazato Jun'ichi, *Kodai Nihon to nantō no kōryū*; Mori Kimiyuki, *Kodai Nihon no taigai ninshiki to tsūkō*; Sakayori, "Gagaku shinmakkatsu ni miru kodai Nihon to tōhoku Ajia."
40 Aleksei Okladnikov, "The Mo-ho Tribes and the P'o-hai State"; Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane*; McCullough, "The Heian Court, 794–1070"; Inoue, "The Century of Reform"; von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Seas*; and Bruce Batten, *Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War and Peace: 500–1300*.
41 This theory is based on the work of Nishigami Sadao and Ishimoda Shō. (For more, see Ishigami Eiichi, *Kodai higashi Ajia chiiki to Nihon*. Kitō Kiyoaki provides an English-language discussion of Ishigami's theory in "International Relations in Ancient East Asia," 1–20.)
42 While many believe that Parhae adopted a subordinate position to Japan, there are no extant records to indicate how Parhae perceived its relationship with Japan. Wang Zhenping (*Ambassadors from the Islands of the Immortals*, 136–138) suggests that both Silla and Parhae acknowledged Japan's superiority in the eighth century, but because each country pursued an agenda of mutual self-interest, no country—China, Silla, Paekche, Koguryŏ, or Japan—played a fixed, dominant role in this geopolitical region.
43 See Yanagida et al., *Kyūshū shinpojiumu: ima kōrokan ga yomigaeru*, 87.
44 See Fuqua, "The Japanese Missions to Tang China and Maritime Exchange in East Asia, 7th–9th Centuries," 138–143.
45 Akiyama, *Nisshi kōshōshi kenkyū*, 208–209; Ishii Masatoshi, "10 seiki no kokusai hendō to Nissō bōeki," 341.

46 Edwin Reischauer, "Notes on T'ang Dynasty Sea Routes," 142–164.
47 Wu Ling, "Kyūseiki tōnichi bōeki ni okeru higashi Ajia shōningun," 96–109. Also, Sugiyama Hiroshi's *Nihon kodai kaiunshi no kenkyū* provides a summary of prewar and postwar Japanese scholarship regarding maritime commercial exchange in East Asia. Arano Yasunori, Ishii Masatoshi, and Murai Shōsuke's *Nihon no taigai kankei 3: Tsūkō, tsūshōen no kakudai*, and Tanaka Fumio's *Kokusai kōeki to kodai Nihon* offer excellent studies on topics of commercial activity with the Tang, Song, Silla, Koryŏ, the Liao (i.e., Khitan), and the southern islands.
48 Bruce Batten, *Gateway to Japan*, 182–192; Koyama Yasunori, "East and West in the Late Classical Age," 374–376; McCullough, "The Heian Court, 794–1070," 96.
49 Charlotte von Verschuer, *Le commerce exterieur du Japon des origines au XVIe siècle*, later published in English as *Across the Perilous Sea: Japanese Trade with China and Korea from the Seventh to the Sixteenth Centuries*.
50 For more, see Batten's *To the Ends of Japan*.
51 Gari Ledyard, "Galloping Along with the Horseriders: Looking for the Founders of Japan," 231–232; Mori Kōichi, *Nihon no kodai dai-ikkan: umi wo wattata hitobito*, 27–32. The quoted passage is from Ledyard, p. 231.
52 Robert Borgen, "The Japanese Mission to China, 801–806," 7.
53 *Shoku Nihongi*, Vol 5, 72–81.
54 Tōno Haruyuki, "Kentōshisen no kōzō to kōkaijutsu," 7–15.
55 William Wayne Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land in Early Japan*.
56 William McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*, 152–153; Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land*, 50–71.
57 Excerpts in English translation are found in Sakamoto Tarō's *The Six National Histories of Japan*, translated by John S. Brownlee. For historical background to the *Six National Histories*, see Marian Ury, "Chinese Learning and Intellectual Life." The *Nihon shoki*, the first of the national histories, has been translated into English by W.G. Aston as *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*.
58 See Mori Katsumi, "Nittō bōeki no keitai," 710.
59 The paper upon which these requests were written was recycled and used in the backing of the "Court Lady Screen" (*Tōrige ritsujo byōbu*), where they remained forgotten until the Tokugawa period. The *Baishiragi no motsuge* has been thoroughly researched by Tōno Haruyuki. See, for instance, *Shōsōin monjo to mokkan no kenkyū*, 311, and "Torige ritsujo byōbu shitabari monjo no kenkyū—Baishiragi no motsuge no kisoteki kōsatsu."

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Part II
Political events and institutions



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4
Jōmon and Yayoi
Premodern to hypermodern

Simon Kaner

Encounters with two eccentric antiquities got me thinking about the relationship between the ancient past (a space now occupied by what are termed the Jōmon and Yayoi periods, which combined lasted from around 15,000 years ago to around 300 CE) and the premodern period in Japan. The first, a woodblock print assigned to the artist Utagawa Toyokuni based on a drawing of the Forum at Rome, caught my attention in an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 2005. Utagawa certainly never visited the Forum at Rome and must have derived his inspiration from information that filtered into Tokugawa period (1600–1868) Japan through the activities of the Dutch East India Company, and he would not have known that the Roman Empire, whose glories are reflected in his woodblock print, was the contemporary of the Yayoi period, which was influenced by Rome's counterpart in East Asia, the Han empire, in whose records occur the first mentions of what we know as Japan.[1] The second is the lower part of a Jōmon pot, which we now know was probably made around 5000 years ago, and which appears to have been re-used as a water container for the tea ceremony, sometime between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, most likely by someone who did not know the term "Jōmon," and yet latterly ended up in the British Museum in London and gained new fame courtesy of the BBC Radio series, "A History of the World in 100 Objects."[2]

Both were probably appreciated by collectors and practitioners of antiquarianism in Edo period Japan, and today both retain a potent agency to transport those who encounter them to other places, and other times.[3] Both are clearly eccentric, and it is perhaps that sense of difference, along with the hints of long-forgotten stories of how they came to be made and their intriguing object biographies, that make them so appealing to contemporary viewers, just as their strangeness spoke to premodern antiquarians.

The scientific discipline of archaeology is an assuredly modern field of discourse in Japan as elsewhere, and indeed the first recognized "archaeological excavation" of an "archaeological site" in Japan, the Ōmori shell middens in 1877, was part of the intellectual revolution that accompanied the adoption of modernity by the Meiji government. Modern archaeology is the study of the human past through its material remains. During the "premodern" period (an appellation that is itself an homage to the teleology of so much Japanese historiography), the material traces of antiquity were the preserve of collectors intrigued by the strange forms they encountered in the natural world around them. Despite Peter Bleed's assertion in what remains the most

thorough exploration of their world in a Western language, that what this assortment of literati, aesthetes, and eccentrics got up to was "almost archaeology," I would argue that it was a long way from what would in the "modern" world be regarded as archaeology, and oddly it may have more to do with some of the concerns of postmodernity, or hypermodernity, the contexts within which archaeology is practiced, and challenged, in contemporary Japan.[4]

In an age when empathy with the past is encouraged as a mode for engaging with history, and the positivist certainties of parts of the twentieth century are relegated from the front line to studies of the history of the discipline, a shift given material form in the arrival of the World Archaeological Congress in Kyoto in the summer of 2016, with all of its associated political baggage and critique of the status quo that has for so long nurtured the Japanese archaeological endeavor into one of the most affluent in the world, it is perhaps opportune to consider what the "premodern" forbears of what we now know as the modern discipline of archaeology would have made of the preoccupations of the field in the early twenty-first century.[5]

Archaeology on display

Each year since the middle 1990s, the Japanese government Agency for Cultural Affairs (Bunkachō) has organized a traveling exhibition of the key discoveries from the past year's archaeological investigations, under the title of "*Hakkutsu sareta Nihon rettō*" ("the Japanese archipelago excavated"). Readers can explore for themselves the highlights of each year's exhibition by consulting the English language webpages of the Japanese Archaeological Association.[6]

To whet the appetite, over the last decade these have included, from the Jōmon period: reports of some of the earliest buildings, associated with some of the earliest pottery in the world, from Kiyotake Kami Inoharu in Miyazaki prefecture (2008); the earliest ceramics from Hokkaido, from the Taishō 3 site (2006); a re-investigation of Fukui Cave in Nagasaki prefecture, one of the classic sites of Japanese archaeology, where the true antiquity of Jōmon pots was first established (2015); a shell midden of huge oyster shells overlying hundreds of pits each containing exceptionally well-preserved basketry containing nuts at Higashi Myō in Saga prefecture (2007); stone circles and other intriguing settings of stones associated with ceremonies and funerals, at Ōmori Katsuyama in Aomori (2010) and Urushikita in Akita prefecture (2012); the smallest and most ancient ceramic *dogū* figure, an exquisite headless torso that would not be out of place in a modern art exhibition, but in fact dating to 11,000 years ago, from Aidani Kumahara in Shiga prefecture (2011); the largest cache of human skeletons yet discovered from any single Jōmon site, representing ninety-one individuals from the Ōdake shell middens on the coast of Toyama prefecture (2015), disturbed, as so many of the mass of traces of the Japanese past over recent decades have been, through development (in this case the construction of the Hokuriku Shinkansen); village-style settlements from Nagatake in Saitama, complete with the burials of those who originally lived there (2014) and Ireibaru in Okinawa, right on the margins of the Jōmon world (2009); and a structured deposit of four polished stone bars, carefully arranged on the floor of a 3000 year old house, at Midorikawa Higashi in Tokyo (2013).

Among the highlighted finds from the Yayoi period exhibited in the same series of exhibitions are: the remains of substantial ditch-enclosed agricultural settlements at Nishi Kawatsu in Shimane prefecture (2013), Kyū Renpeijū in Kagawa prefecture (2012), thought to be on the scale of the famous and now reconstructed settlement of Yoshinogari in Saga prefecture, originally claimed as the residence of one of Japan's earliest named rulers (Queen Himiko of Yamataikoku), Isshiki Aokai in Aichi prefecture (2011), and the northernmost such settlement yet found along the Japan Sea coast, at Yamamoto in Niigata prefecture (2007); discoveries of bronze bells and halberds at Yanagisawa (2009), and a bronze working center at the Sugu site in

Fukuoka prefecture, in the area thought to have been the location of the country of Na, mentioned in early Chinese chronicles, to which we will return below (2010); and kingly graves of the kingdom of Matsuro at Sakura no Baba in Shiga prefecture, reinvestigated over sixty years after their initial discovery (2008).[7]

Performativity is recognized as an important component in human development, and the regularity of these exhibitions, along with others at more local levels and the public open excavation days, along with the ubiquity of archaeological parks and museums across Japan ensures that archaeology has a high profile in contemporary Japan. The drive to display is perhaps part of our shared human heritage.[8] In early modern Japan, objects from antiquity were acquired to be appreciated mainly in private, with a small group of friends. Today, archaeological antiquities from the Jōmon and Yayoi periods are exhibited in public in Japan on a massive scale.

In recent years archaeological artifacts have traveled overseas to be exhibited in major cities in many countries, returning to Japan with new value and prestige acquired through this role of cultural ambassadors, contributing to Japan's soft diplomacy. Iconic objects from the Jōmon and Yayoi along with other periods inspire public art as part of attempts to reinvigorate a sense of local identity through association with particular forms of ancient material culture. Hence we find manhole covers along the Shinano River bearing images of Jōmon flame pots, bronze Jōmon *dogū* figurines adorning the main street in Aomori, and telephone boxes with roofs inspired by terracotta figurines (*haniwa*) near Saitobaru in Miyazaki—whence Jinmu, the legendary founder of the imperial line, is thought to have commenced his great progress that ultimately led to Nara and the establishment of the Yamato dynasty.

Archaeology in contemporary Japan is for the people. During the early modern period, however, while objects from antiquity occasionally came to the attention of a privileged class of cognoscenti and literati, they were objects of curiosity, to be appreciated from an aesthetic perspective, and were only rarely used to challenge pre-existing conceptualizations of the ancient world as set down in texts like the *Kojiki* ("Record of Ancient Matters"; completed in 712), and the *Nihon shoki* ("Chronicle of Japan"; dating to 720). They were acquired and admired by collectors, who enjoyed viewing and handling them with their friends, and to an extent they fueled the curiosity about the natural world and the past that characterized Early Modern antiquarian discourse.

With the advent of modernity, and the drive toward "civilization and enlightenment," some of these material traces of antiquity were put on display for the general public for the first time. Some of the more pioneering antiquarians of the later nineteenth century, such as Minamushi Sanjin, the nickname given to Toki Gengo (1836–1900), found it advantageous to put the discoveries from his diggings on display in the neighborhood of where he made his discoveries—perhaps to encourage locals to reveal further sites. Antiquities also featured in the great exhibitions of the later nineteenth century; they became important in legitimating Japan's claim to be a new world power.[9]

Networks of antiquarians

In 1872 one of the first major public displays of ancient ceramics and stone tools was organized by Baron Kanda Takahira (1838–1898), who, in his 1884 publication, *Prehistoric Stone Tools*, noted that there were over one hundred individuals who regarded themselves as antiquarians in early Meiji Japan.[10] As mentioned previously, Peter Bleed has provided an excellent introduction to antiquarian activity during the Edo period, in which he introduced some of the major figures, dividing their scholarship into three categories: historical, practical, and avocational. Bleed argued that the Juxi school of Neo-Confucian philosophy favored by the Tokugawa authorities

emphasized a rational approach that led to the "downplaying of the role of the supernatural in the real world." This then influenced scholars such as Hayashi Razan to suggest that Jinmu, the founder of the imperial line, was a Chinese prince rather than a direct descendant of the gods—a shift in perspective that would undermine the imperial institution in a way that would doubtless suit the shogunate. The backlash came with the *kokugaku* school of National Learning, which rejected any such revisionism in regard to the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*.[11]

Bleed observes that most Edo period scholars were little interested in the material traces of the ancient past. And yet many built up considerable collections of curios and other objects, including antiquities. One was Arai Hakuseki (1656–1725) who took an interest in stone arrowheads from northern Japan, as part of a broader concern for the history of weaponry. He argued that these were human-made, rather than falling from heaven, and suggested that they were relics of an invasion of northern Japan by the "Shuku-shinjin," who Chinese records describe as inhabiting Manchuria, and who are mentioned in early Japanese sources as invading northern Japan up to the sixth century.[12]

The extensive networks developed by Edo period antiquarians are exemplified by the figure of Kimura Kenkadō (1736–1802), perhaps best known for the work *Nihon sankai meisan zue* ("Representation and Description of the Most Famous Terrestrial and Maritime Products of Japan"). The scion of a disgraced sake producer, Kimura became a very successful stationery trader in Osaka, learned some Latin and Dutch, acquired over time one of the greatest collections of Dutch books, and corresponded with some of the Dutch residents at Dejima. He was a collector, antiquary, botanist, connoisseur, tea aficionado, and artist, and the private museum that he built up was one of the greatest collections of his time, acquired after his death by the Japanese state for a considerable sum.[13]

We have a portrait of him painted by Tani Bunchō, with whom he shared a passion for collecting. Lachard has provided a taste of the detail of Kenkadō's everyday life, as recorded in his *Kenkadō nikki* ("daily notes"), which describes more than 40,000 visitors over a period of twenty years. Tō Teikan (1732–1797) was in his circle, an antiquarian whose 1791 publication *Shōkōhatsu* described the clothing of *haniwa* terracotta figures that were set up on the ancient burial mounds, argued for major Korean influences on the early history of Japan, and suggested on the basis of comparisons with continental historical schema that the start of the imperial line occurred some six hundred years later than proposed in the early Japanese chronicles: the temerity of which led to Tō being labeled a lunatic by Motoori Norinaga.[14]

Lachard describes Kimura's interactions with his fellow antiquarians and collectors as being akin to a private club, the objectives of whose members were "the fastidious selection, purchase, and use of objects and books not as ends in themselves but rather for the intellectual pleasures, exchanges and advancement of knowledge afforded them by their collection."[15] Although we do not have details of any antiquities in his collection, which we would now date to the Jōmon or Yayoi periods, surviving accounts of his activities provide a compelling picture of the intensity of the exchanges that underpinned Edo antiquarian networks, and we can imagine someone like Kimura appreciating the ancient pot that was eventually to find its way to the British Museum, with which we began.

Eras and transitions: from the Age of the Gods to calibrated radiocarbon dates

The contemporary division of Japanese prehistory into Palaeolithic, Jōmon, and Yayoi is not something that our early modern antiquarians would have recognized, but they would have recognized the transition from the Age of the Gods to the historical periods, as set out in the

ancient chronicles. There appears to have been a broad ontological security deriving from an absolute belief in the accounts of the origins of the Japanese archipelago set out in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*.

Despite the best efforts of early chroniclers of Japanese archaeology, notably Neil Gordon Munro, who dedicated much space in the early sections of his monumental *Prehistoric Japan* to speculations on an Old Stone Age, it was not until 1949 when excavations at Iwajuku in Gunma Prefecture produced irrefutable evidence for a Palaeolithic period—an Old Stone Age predating the use of pottery.[16] Currently the earliest human occupation of the Japanese archipelago dates to around 40,000 years ago. The transition from the Jōmon to the Yayoi, from prehistoric non-agricultural foraging societies to protohistoric (i.e., there are historical documents from China which refer to what was happening in Japan at the time) farming, metal-using societies continues be a preoccupation of many Japanese archaeologists, even though some scholars now try to understand the sequence in terms of continuities, in particular in regard to the origins of agriculture.[17]

Classifying the past into neat, discrete periods, one progressing from another in a tidy unilineal sequence, is a product of enlightenment modernity, and the desire to separate fully modern humans from their primitive predecessors. Recent Japanese historiography is prone to the valorization of the transition: the recognition of key dates that represent major thresholds in the narrative of history, disjunctures that mark a new direction, points of no return that consign all that went before to the dustbin of the past. Perhaps it begins with the founding of imperial capitals: 710 is the start of the Nara period, 794 marked the start of the Heian civilization, just as 1185 marked its end; Japan was reunified in 1603 under the Tokugawa shoguns, only to be reborn again in 1868 with the Meiji Restoration, wherein lay the seeds of the latest transformation borne from destruction, 1945, and defeat at the end of World War II.

This final transition was of the utmost importance for the subsequent development of Japanese archaeology. For the first time in the history of Japan, the authority of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* was not only questioned, but entirely rejected. Clare Fawcett and Junko Habu have documented how the postwar occupying powers oversaw the redaction of Japanese school texts on history: enforcing the deletion of sections that referred to the early texts and their mythological dogmas. Japan's early history was expunged, leaving a void that was to be filled by archaeology.[18]

Often inspired by Marxist-informed notions, new generations of archaeologists such as Wajma Seiichi and Kondo Yoshiro, and school teachers including Miyasaka Eiichi organized public excavations designed to elucidate the everyday lives of Japanese ancestors. School children had the opportunity to recover the material traces of the ancient lives from the soil at sites such as Tsukinowa, a large burial mound in Okayama, Toro a rice-farming village in Shizuoka and Togari-ishi, a Jōmon settlement in Nagano, in place of learning about the exploits of imperial ancestors.[19]

For many years, prehistoric archaeologists clung to such certainties in their own chronologies. The Palaeolithic ended around 10,000 years ago, conveniently coinciding with the end of the last Ice Age. The Jōmon period, named after the cord-marked pottery that Edward Morse identified at Ōmori, ended at 300 BCE, with the arrival of rice farming and metallurgy. The subsequent Yayoi period, which saw the rise and fall of a series of regional polities (the countries or "*kuni*" identified in Chinese dynastic records, such as the *Wei zhih*), lasted until around 300 CE, when the hegemony of the Yamato dynasty coalesced into something akin to a unified state that controlled hitherto uncontrollable lands from its core in the Kinai region of modern-day Nara, Kyoto, and Osaka, materialized in the construction of large mounded tombs or *kofun*. New generations of absolute dating methods, including radiocarbon dating supported by tree-ring calibration, is

transforming our understanding of chronologies, providing increasingly high resolution dates for the already high resolution archaeological record of the Jōmon and Yayoi, and fueling controversy over when these albeit artificial constructs should be regarded as beginning and ending.[20]

Jōmon pilgrimages

The many thousands of excavations of Jōmon sites that have taken place over the last half century have demonstrated that the Jōmon achievement is indeed remarkable: some of the earliest ceramics in the world; the ability to sustain village-style communities over many generations, in the case of Sannai Maruyama in Aomori prefecture for nearly 2000 years; an intensive relationship with plants and animals, notably chestnuts, lacquer, and wild boar, but without significant cultivation or domestication; the maintenance of extensive networks for the exchange of commodities, including valued stones such as obsidian and jadeite; an exceptional sense of design which speaks to modern sensibilities; a highly developed worldview which gave rise to complex ritual and ceremonial facilities and monuments including stone circles.

The significance of understanding Jōmon archaeology for the history of humanity as a whole is recognized through the inclusion of a series of Jōmon sites in Japan's tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage status. As part of an initiative to attract tourists to make the pilgrimage to ancient sites during the cultural Olympiad leading up to the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics in 2020, the Agency for Cultural Affairs has designated Jōmon sites in Niigata prefecture that have yielded examples of the elaborate flame style of pottery vessels dating to around 5000 years ago as "Japan Heritage" sites, in conjunction with the Snow Country along the Shinano River associated with the eponymous novel by the Nobel laureate Kawabata Yasunari (himself the proud owner of a Jōmon *dogu* figure). Our Edo period antiquarians would doubtless have appreciated the opportunity to travel and encounter such ancient wonders.

The Jōmon culture was identified during Morse's investigations of the Ōmori shell middens in 1877, but over a thousand years earlier, the *Hitachi fudoki* of 713 recorded observations of shell deposits, which were assumed to be the work of giants, who had gathered up shellfish from the sea, eaten them, and left behind the shells at a location called Ōgushi. The giant trope recurs in legends from around Japan.[21] Observations of ancient stone arrowheads were also relatively common. For example, in 839 stone arrowheads were noticed lying on the ground after heavy rain in Dewa province (modern-day Yamagata prefecture) and were thus considered to have fallen from the sky, as recorded in *Shoku Nihon kōki* and then later in the 880s in *Sandai jitsuroku*. By the later 1700s, the notion that such objects could be of human manufacture were beginning to circulate, based on observations that stone tools were also found in ancient graves.[22]

In 1623, according to the seventeenth-century *Eiroku nikki*, the first ancient pots were unearthed at the site of Kamegaoka ("Hill of the Jars") in Mutsu province (modern day Aomori prefecture). Parts of ceramic figures were recovered from the Sannai site on the terraces at the rear of Mutsu Bay. The first major archaeological excavations at Kamegaoka were undertaken by Satō Denzo in 1895–1896, and by the time Shimizu Junzō of Keio University embarked on his campaign of investigations in 1950, over 3000 "curious earthenwares" had already been dug out from the site.[23] Today, the Sannai site is understood to be just one location of the Sannai Maruyama settlement complex, the largest Jōmon site yet encountered in Japan. Investigations of the site began in the 1990s, initially undertaken in advance of the construction of a new prefectural baseball stadium. But plans for the stadium had to be abandoned part-way through when the true scale and significance of the site became apparent.

By the time Morse arrived in Japan and undertook his research at Ōmori in 1877, networks of collectors whose interests included antiquarianism existed in Tokyo, Osaka, and elsewhere.

Suzuki Hiroyuki has provided a recent and engaging summary of Morse's encounters with some of these people, in particular Ninagawa Noritane, described by Morse as a "celebrated antiquarian." Ninagawa is especially well known for his seven-volume series *Kanko zusetsu: Tōki no bu* (to which Ninagawa himself gave the French title, *Notice historique et descriptive sur les arts et industries japonaises: Art céramique*), published between 1876 and 1880. Suzuki reproduces Morse's own accounts of his meetings with antiquarians, which included intense object handling sessions.[24]

Such haptic encounters with ancient artifacts was clearly an important part of the antiquarian experience, lost on generations of later museum-goers whose experience is limited to gazing at the material traces of the past through vitrines, but which resonates with those for whom the practice of archaeology involves intimate studies of artifacts, something which has once again come into vogue with the "material turn" in the discipline in the West, and which perhaps never went out of fashion in Japan, where vestiges of these small gatherings of antiquarians can perhaps be found in the myriad specialist archaeology meetings that happen with a remarkable frequency, often at weekends, in contemporary Japan.

Antiquarian interests in early modern Japan often coincided with interests in travel and local specialties and regional products (*bussangaku*). Minomushi Sanjin was one such itinerant antiquarian, and others included Matsuura Takeshirō (1818–1888), the explorer of Ezō, who introduced Morse to his extensive collection of ancient beads and other stone artifacts, and who coined the name Hokkaido for Japan's northern island. But new drafts were disturbing the refined world of the traditional Edo antiquarians, and the Meiji era rejection of "old things" was associated with the development of new approaches: the archaeology espoused by Morse himself, drawing on principles of evolution and stratigraphy, geology, and anthropology.

Much of the later nineteenth century was taken up with attempting to determine where Japanese populations fitted within the family of races, and early anthropological archaeologists such as Tsuboi Shōgorō, who was to study in London from 1888 to 1891 exerted great effort in trying to identify which peoples were responsible for what, and in particular how the Ainu, considered aboriginal peoples of northern Japan, related to later Japanese populations. Mark Hudson has surveyed the development of the study of ethnogenesis in the archipelago, which still structures much of the debate around the transition from the Jōmon to Yayoi periods, as generations of scholars attempted to link the findings of biological anthropology (latterly including genetic studies) with reconstructing a linguistic prehistory of the Japanese language, with the traces of material culture.[25]

For long the Ainu were considered the direct descendants of Jōmon peoples, and it is only in relatively recent years that they are now recognized as having their own distinct ethnic identity. This identity was forged in medieval rather than ancient times, and late twentieth-century revival in awareness of this identity underpinned moves which culminated in the recognition by UNESCO of the Ainu as an indigenous people of Japan in their own right, shortly to have their own National Museum in Shiraoi where the bones of Ainu ancestors, dug up and investigated by anthropologists from the later nineteenth century as Hokkaido became the focus of colonization, to then be stored in university museums as objects of research interest rather than ancestral remains requiring appropriate respect. Walter Edwards has traced the shifts in prewar ideologies and the associated development in archaeology and cultural property management.[26]

Concern about exactly who the Jōmon populations were have faded in recent years, as their material achievements have given rise to their rehabilitation from primitive aborigines to wise ancestors who knew how to inhabit the archipelago in very different ways to contemporary Japanese populations. This rehabilitation has taken various guises, perhaps starting with the recognition of the artistic creativity evident in their trademark products, pottery. This was perhaps first recognized by Okamoto Tarō, the surrealist-inspired modern Japanese artist,

renowned in particular for his Tower of the Sun, which formed a centerpiece for the epoch-defining Expo70 in Osaka. The tremendous diversity of Jōmon pottery styles was given order initially by Yamanouchi Sugao and others in the middle decades of the twentieth century.

The many millennia of the Jōmon are now divided into six subperiods on the basis of changing pottery styles. Over seventy major regional ceramics styles are now recognized, along with hundreds of local variants: a localism that would have doubtless appealed to the *bussankai* antiquarians of the Edo period.

The Jōmon peoples developed resilient lifestyles that supported a continuous tradition from the start of the Holocene until the arrival of rice farming just under 3000 years ago. This resilience and the apparent understanding of the environmental affordances of the Japanese islands suggest to contemporary audiences a deep sympathy with natural rhythms leading to a harmonious and peaceful coexistence with the world around them. This evokes respect and wonder in Japan today, faced by seemingly overwhelming challenges including rural depopulation, environmental degradation, and social alienation. A new romanticized view of the Jōmon period is embedded in Jōmon-themed festivals, in which the forager lifestyle is increasingly fetishized.[27]

The sparkle of the Yayoi

Contemporary Japanese archaeology identifies the Yayoi period as beginning shortly after the start of the first millennium BCE in northern Kyushu, with the arrival of the first paddy fields for growing wet rice from the Korean peninsula. The chronology of the start of the Yayoi and the end of the Jōmon in that part of Japan is a continuing source of debate, but it now appears that it took several centuries for the technological package involved in cultivating Japonica rice to be accepted by communities further south and east, although once adopted, it was taken up with enthusiasm—as indicated by the scale of early paddy field systems around western Japan.[28]

The adoption of rice farming was closely followed by the appearance of bronze and then iron objects, and was also associated with the advent of silk weaving, an industry with which Japan was later to become very closely identified. Competition over good agricultural land, perhaps heightened by population increases as a result of the additional carrying capacity afforded by an agricultural economy gave rise to the first evidence for institutionalized violence in the archipelago, as raiding and warfare became endemic later in the Yayoi period, as attested to by headless burials, an increase in weapons, and the appearance of defended hilltop settlements. The early Chinese chronicles give some flavor of these developments in their accounts of the "Wajin unrest," as regional polities jostled for control of ever larger tracts of land. Not all interactions were violent, however, and the exchange of commodities flourished, leading to the establishment of trading entrepots through which flowed a wide range of goods, many from considerable distances.

Although the Yayoi culture was not formally identified by archaeologists until excavations at the Mukogaoka shell midden in Yayoi-chō (adjacent to the modern-day Hongō campus of the University of Tokyo) in 1884, objects that can now be dated with certainty to the Yayoi period were discovered in antiquity. In what was one of the earliest recorded such discoveries, in 668 a bronze bell, or *dōtaku*, was discovered at Sūfukuji in Ōmi province (modern day Shiga prefecture), as recorded in illustrated manuscripts associated with the establishment of the Ishiyama temple in 749.[29]

To date, over four hundred such bronze bells have been discovered from the central Chūgoku and Kansai regions. One of the most renowned is thought to have been owned at one point by the artist Tani Bunchō. The *kokugaku* scholar Hirata Atsutane (1776–1843) included illustrations

of five bronze bells, including the Bunchō bell, in his *Kōnin rekiun kikō*, based on the ninth-century *Kōnin rekiun ki*, and concluded that they dated to the Age of the Gods.[30] Bells were not the only bronze objects to attract attention: in 1175 the discovery of a bronze halberd from Dazaifu in Chikuzen province (modern-day Fukuoka) was reported.[31] In 1823 Aoyanagi (1766–1835) reported the discovery of some thirty-five Chinese bronze mirrors, beads, bronze halberds, and bronze swords associated with a ceramic burial urn in Mikumo in Chikuzen prefecture, and his account included illustrations of these objects. Mikumo is now known as a major location of Yayoi activity.[32] One can but wonder how antiquarians such as Tani Bunchō and Aoyanagi would have responded to discoveries such as those at Kōjindani and Kamo Iwakura in Shimane prefecture, where 358 bronze swords were excavated in1996 and 39 bronze bells (*dōtaku*) in 1998 respectively, confirming the antiquity of the political significance of the Izumo region.

In the same year as Aoyanagi was recording the discoveries from Mikumo, Philipp von Siebold arrived in Deshima, the Dutch factory in Nagasaki which provided a window on the Western world for Japan under the self-imposed isolation of the Tokugawa shogunate. Siebold was to go on to produce his magisterial twenty-volume work *Nippon* from 1832 to 1851, and from an early stage he, and latterly his son Heinrich, took interest in the archaeological remains they encountered. Indeed it was stone tools from the Siebold collection that the pioneering curator of the British Museum, Augustus Woolaston Franks, introduced at the 3rd International Prehistory Congress in Norwich and London, in one of the first public presentations on Japanese archaeology overseas, in which he argued for a "Stone Age From Japan" in 1868, a decade prior to Morse's investigations at Omori and just three years after John Lubbock introduced the concepts of an Old Stone Age and a New Stone Age in his *Prehistoric Times*. A new era had begun, in which external interest in Japanese antiquity was beginning, which was eventually to usher in a new age involving "proper" archaeological investigation, and which was to see objects from the Jōmon and Yayoi periods appearing in European and American museum collections and the first major publications on the subject in English.[33]

In 1784, a farmer on Shikanoshima in Chikuzen province (modern-day Fukuoka prefecture) in northern Kyushu, unearthed a golden seal. He duly handed it in to the domanial authorities, the Kuroda family, in whose possession it remains today. The seal comprised a square base, 2.4 centimeters long and just under 1 centimeter high, with a handle in the shape of an animal with a snake head. The base of the seal bore an inscription in relief, comprising five Chinese ideographs in three columns, which can be translated as "King of the state of Na of Wa, vassal of the Han." Wa was the name given to the Japanese islands in the third century *Wei zhih*. The *Hou Han shu*, a history of the later Han dynasty (25–225), records that tribute was received from the King of Na, one of the "Eastern Barbarians," and that a seal was sent as acknowledgment of the relationship by Emperor Kuang-wu of the later Han.[34] Although the authenticity of the seal is questioned by some, the object was ultimately made a National Treasure and is today displayed in the Fukuoka Art Museum.

A number of scholars of the Edo period were fascinated by early Chinese documents, which presented some of the first written accounts of Japan. The most important is the *Wei zhih*, which not only provided details of everyday life and the politics of the peoples of Wa, but most intriguingly offered directions about how to get there from China, purportedly based on a journey undertaken by envoys from the Wei court. Arai Hakuseki noted all this in his *Koshitsū* ("Treatise on Ancient History") of 1716, in which he assumed that the named country of Yamatai, ruled over by Queen Himiko, the first named personage we know of from Japan, was located in Yamato province (modern-day Nara prefecture). The leading light of the Kokugaku school of National Learning, however, Motoori Norinaga, in his 1778 work *Gyojū gaigen* ("An Outline of the Subduing of Foreigners"), claimed that by following the somewhat tortuous directions given in the *Wei zhih* in detail suggested that Yamatai was in fact located in Kyushu. These claims gave

rise to one of the major controversies of Japanese archaeology which continues to the present day, and which feeds the mass tourism industry.[35] It is unlikely, for instance, that the enormous scale of the reconstructed Yayoi settlement at Yoshinogari in Saga prefecture would have been supported so assiduously by both the prefectural authorities and the Highways Agency had it not been for the (no matter how faint) possibility that this was indeed Himiko's residence.

Valuing the past from the premodern to the hypermodern

The archaeology of the Jōmon and Yayoi periods in Japan represents a very rich field of discourse. Neither period was defined as such during until the Meiji era, when archaeology was introduced to Japan as part of the movement toward "civilization and enlightenment," and indeed archaeology is itself a thoroughly modern discipline, with a firm basis in rational, scientific observation and interpretation. As Peter Bleed noted, however, in his 1986 survey of Edo period antiquarians and the roots of Meiji period archaeology, aspects of the particular forms of "premodern" antiquarian endeavors have in some ways shaped later archaeology, creating a tradition of study somewhat distinctive from archaeology in other countries.[36]

This chapter has sought to explore some of those themes a little further. The immense scale of the Japanese archaeological achievement, in particular during the years of rapid economic development from the 1960s to the early 2000s, and the particularities of doing archaeology in Japan, with its intense networking, strong local and regional traditions of study, and great emphasis placed on the civic responsibility of the archaeologist, have all together produced an archaeological record for the Jōmon and Yayoi periods that is rich, nuanced, and, with current developments in digitization exemplified by the Digital Repository of Japanese Archaeological Reports now held by the Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, aided by new online translation tools on the cusp of becoming freely accessible to global audiences for the first time.[37]

With the slowdown in economic development and the associated relative decrease in the numbers of archaeological excavations, Japan's highly trained archaeological workforce, whether in national institutions and museums, universities, or local government centers, has increasing opportunities to reflect on the larger significance of the discoveries of the past century. There is recognition of the need for new ways in which to engage in with their public, both domestic and foreign, capturing some of the imagination and energy evident in the hypermodern. One result has been virtual encounters with goggle-eyed Jōmon *dogū* avatars in *Second Life* and Bronzog *Pokémon Go* designed after a *dōtaku*. Advances in 3D printing technology, moreover, open up new opportunities for everyone to handle exact replicas of fragile originals, and to experience something of the haptic thrill appreciated by Early Modern antiquarians.

There are also signs of increasing international collaboration, each bringing new possibilities for the application of new research methods, from genetics to isotopes, artistic interpretations, and display techniques. Through the records left by Early Modern antiquarians, we can see that the intellectual curiosity that drove men like Arai Hakuseki and Kimura Kenkadō is something to be cherished by contemporary specialists, operating in our own hypermodern world.

Notes

1 Timon Screech, "Europe in Asia: The Impact of Western Art and Technology in Japan," 318. Massimo Soumaré, *Japan in Five Ancient Chinese Chronicles*.
2 Neil MacGregor, *A History of the World in 100 Objects*.
3 The terms "Tokugawa period" and "Edo period" are synonymous, the latter designating the geographic center of political power, and the former the family who held it. For more on periodization in Japanese history, see the introduction to this volume, or Karl F. Friday, "Sorting the Past."

4 Peter Bleed, "Almost Archaeology: Early Archaeological Interest in Japan."
5 The journal *Archaeologies* gives a flavor of the issues with which the Congress is centrally concerned. Those wishing to read a survey of the archaeology of the Jōmon and Yayoi periods are directed to Melvin Aikens, "Origins of the Japanese People"; Mizoguchi Kōji, *Archaeology, Society and Identity in Modern Japan*; Werner Steinhaus and Simon Kaner, *An Illustrated Companion to Japanese Archaeology*; Takesue Jun'ichi et al., *Yayoi jidai*; Teshigahara Akira, *Jōmon jidai gaidobukku*; and Conrad Totman, *Japan: An Environmental History*. Those finding the links to Edo period antiquarianism of interest and the history of Japanese archaeology may care to consult Gina L. Barnes, "The Idea of Prehistory in Japan"; Lothar von Falkenhausen, "Antiquarianism in East Asia: A Preliminary Overview"; Mizoguchi, *Archaeology, Society and Identity*; and Saito Tadashi, *Nihon kokogaku shi shiryō shūsei*.
6 http://archaeology.jp/sites/2015/index.htm for 2015; change the date for other years.
7 Mark J. Hudson and Gina L. Barnes, "Yoshinogari: A Yayoi Settlement in Northern Kyushu"; J. Edward Kidder, Jr., "The Earliest Societies in Japan." A more structured introduction to the material traces of these two periods can be found in Werner Steinhaus and Simon Kaner, *An Illustrated Companion to Japanese Archaeology*, and updates on the most recent developments in the field are provided in convenient English language summaries in the *Japanese Journal of Archaeology* (www.jjarchaeology.org).
8 Cf Peter J. Wilson, *The Domestication of the Human Species*.
9 Simon Kaner, "Antiquarianism and Early Archaeology in Japan," 72.
10 Margarita Diaz-Andreu, *A World History of Nineteenth Century Archaeology*.
11 Bleed, "Almost Archaeology."
12 Bleed, "Almost Archaeology," 60.
13 François Lachard, *The Scholar and the Unicorn: Antiquarians, Eccentrics and Connoisseurs in Eighteenth-Century Japan*, 353.
14 Bleed, "Almost Archeology," 61.
15 Lachard, *The Scholar and the Unicorn*, 361–362.
16 Neil Gordon Munro, *Prehistoric Japan*; Aikens and Higuchi, *Prehistory of Japan*, 42–45.
17 See Simon Kaner, with Kenichi Yano, "The Origins of Agriculture in the Japanese Archipelago."
18 Clare Fawcett and Junko Habu, "Education and Archaeology in Japan."
19 See Walter Edwards, "Japanese Archaeology and Cultural Properties Management: Prewar Ideology and Postwar Legacies."
20 Enrico Crema, "Modelling Temporal Uncertainty in Archaeological Analysis." For more on the *Wei zhih* and other Chinese records chronicling archaic Japan, see Ryusaku Tsunoda and L. Carrington Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories: Later Han through Ming Dynasties*.
21 For *Hitachi fudoki*, see Akimoto Kichirō, *Fudoki*. English translations of this text include Kōno Shozo, "Hitachi fudoki"; and Mark C. Funke, "Hitachi no Kuni Fudoki."
22 Teshigahara Akira, *Nihon kokogaku shi*.
23 Shimizu Junzo, *Kamegaoka: A Study of the Kamegaoka Neolithic Site, Aomori Prefecture, Japan*.
24 Suzuki Hiroyuki, "Ninagawa Noritane and Antiquarians in the Early Meiji Period," 406.
25 Mark Hudson, *Ruins of Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Japanese Islands*.
26 Walter Edwards, "Japanese Archaeology and Cultural Properties Management: Prewar Ideology and Postwar Legacies."
27 Mark Hudson, "Foragers as Fetish in Modern Japan."
28 Kaner, "The Origins of Agriculture."
29 Teshigahara Akira, *Jomon jidai gaidobukku*.
30 Sahara Makoto and Harunari Hideji, *Dotaku no bi*, 252.
31 Teshigahara Akira, *Nihon kokogaku shi*.
32 Aikens and Higuchi, *Prehistory of Japan*, 206–210; Teshigahara Akira, *Nihon kokogaku shi*.
33 Simon Kaner, "William Gowland (1842–1922), Pioneer of Japanese Archaeology"; *The Power of Dogu: Ceramic Figurines from Ancient Japan*; and, "Japan." Munro, *Prehistoric Japan*.
34 See Tsunoda and Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories*.
35 Useful summaries of this controversy in English include J. Edward Kidder, Jr., *Himiko and Japan's Elusive Chiefdom of Yamatai: Archaeology, History, and Mythology*; and William Wayne Farris, *Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures: Issues in the Historical Archaeology of Ancient Japan*.
36 Bleed, "Almost Archaeology."
37 See, for example, www.wakoku.eu.

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5
The Kofun era and early state formation

Ken'ichi Sasaki

In the middle third century CE, giant keyhole-shaped (*zenpō-kōen*) mounded tombs, or *kofun*, appeared in the southeastern Nara Basin, and quickly spread across most regions of Japan, except for Hokkaido and the Ryūkyū Islands. The Hashihaka tumulus (278 meters in length, and 35 meters in height, with a circular rear mound 160 meters in diameter), located in Sakurai City, in the southeastern part of the Nara Basin, is considered to be the earliest keyhole-shaped tomb. This marks the beginning of the Kofun era, which lasted until the beginning of the seventh century.

This flamboyant mortuary practice was not the only aspect of society that changed from the Yayoi to Kofun eras. For one thing, the new age was also marked by the disappearance of moats enclosing settlements. By the late Yayoi era in northern Kyushu, it seems that influential people appeared, who could maintain larger storehouses, and yet these influential people resided within moated enclosures together with ordinary residences.[1] In the Kofun era, settlements were no longer enclosed by moats, but elites began to reside in mansions, enclosed by moats and spatially distinct from ordinary settlements.[2] Archaeologists suspect that this radical change in settlement patterns was related to the appearance of giant tumuli.

Scholars divided the 350-year-long Kofun era into three phases: Early (from the middle third to the fourth century, CE), Middle (the fifth century), and Late (the sixth century). While the principal symbol of authority in the Early phase was bronze mirrors, iron armor took over as the most important status symbol in the Middle phase. The location of the largest keyhole-shaped tombs shifted from the Nara Basin in the Early phase to the Osaka plain in the Middle phase. In the sixth century, the location of the largest keyhole-shaped tumulus shifted back to the Nara Basin, and horse trappings—saddles, stirrups, and other accoutrements of equestrian culture—and decorative swords became the key status symbol. The construction of mounded tombs continued until the beginning of the eighth century, with *kofun* built in the seventh century sometimes referred to as belonging to a Final Phase of tumulus construction. The seventh century is also known as the historic Asuka Period.

The appearance of keyhole-shaped tombs in the middle third century was a major departure from the mortuary practices of the preceding Yayoi period, which had been regionally distinctive. The adoption of the keyhole-shape represented a replacement of localized customs with a construction plan maintained by the highest-ranking chieftain in Yamato, and shared with local

elites as a sign of alliance, friendship, or loyalty to the Yamato chieftain. Indeed, archaeologists find one-half, one-third, or one-sixth copies of the Hashihaka mounded tomb in the present-day Okayama and Kyoto prefectures.[3]

In addition to a construction plan, the Yamato chieftain also distributed bronze mirrors, referred to as *sankaku-buchi-shinju-kyō* ("triangular-rimmed mirrors with deity and beast patterns"), cast from the same mold to local elites. Kobayashi Yukio (1911–1989) developed an influential hypothesis that the Yamato chieftain distributed these mirrors as a sign of recognition of allegiance. Kobayashi also argued that the idea that Yamato chieftains utilized their diplomatic ties with China to distinguish themselves from other elites, and that the spatial distribution of these mirrors—concentrated in the Nara, Kyoto, and Osaka region, where the central court is presumed to have been located—serves as evidence for the existence of a strong central polity that controlled local regions.[4] At present, archaeologists debate whether they were manufactured in Wei China or in Japan by Chinese craftsmen. The latter possibility would undermine Kobayashi's reasoning concerning the importance of the Yamato chieftain's China connections. Nevertheless, his argument on the spatial distribution of bronze mirrors remains convincing.

Debate over state formation: historians' contributions

The distribution of standardized, keyhole-shaped tombs across most of Japan, as well as the distribution of *sankaku-buchi-shinju-kyō* and, in the Middle Kofun era, of iron armor presumably produced in the center, suggest that a centralized state was already emerging in the Early Kofun era. Japanese archaeologists and historians today agree that Japanese political organization evolved toward statehood during the Kofun period, but they hotly debate when it crossed the threshold into a state-level polity.

The major points of contention are the extent to which society in the Kofun era was centralized, and the extent of Yamato control over other regions. On one side of the controversy are scholars, such as Kobayashi Yukio, who argue that a strong central polity emerged during the Early Kofun era. On the other, are those, including myself, who contend that local polities remained relatively autonomous until much later, and that socio-political organization did not reach the level of a state until the seventh century.[5]

Prior to 1991, the only archaeological studies that directly addressed the question of state formation in Japan were Kobayashi Yukio's *Kofun jidai no kenkyū* (1961) and Kondō Yoshirō's (1925–2009) *Zenpō-kōen-fun no jidai* (1983). All other contributions to understanding the formation of Japanese states were made by historians.

It is also important to note that Marxist perspectives dominated studies of Japanese archaeology and ancient history until the 1980s. Japanese scholars in the 1970s and 1980s were preoccupied with Engels' definition of the state, as outlined in his *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, and tended to focus on four attributes that must be present in order for an entity to be properly called a state: the grouping of members on a territorial basis, the institution of a public force, the power of taxation, and the existence of officials standing above society.

Those who believe that Kofun era society was not a state-level civilization place it instead at the upper end of Engels' barbarism stage of development. Historians have used the concept of "tribal confederacy" (analogous to the Iroquois Confederacy in North America) to describe this stage.[6] Indeed, Kondō's aforementioned *Zenpō-kōen-fun no jidai* discusses social evolution from the Early Yayoi era to the end of the Kofun period, describing Kofun-era society as a tribal confederacy based on kinship or quasi-kinship ties. For Kondō, the shared keyhole shape of the burial mounds was a reflection of kinship or quasi-kinship ties.

In the preface to *Zenpō-kōen-fun no jidai*, Kondō mentioned that he was influenced by the work of Ishimoda Shō (1912–1986) and Hara Hidesaburō (b. 1934). Ishimoda's seminal work is *Nihon no kodai kokka* (1971), although the coverage of the Kofun era in this study is thin. While Ishimoda was, like other Japanese historians and archaeologists of the post-World War II era, under the influence of Marxist historical materialism, he attempted to craft a new framework applicable to archaic Japan. He dismissed a unilinear evolutionary framework, and emphasized instead the importance of interactions with China. He argued that, while Japanese society in the late second and early third century, the era of Yamatai described in the official Chinese history *Wei zhi*, was at the tribal level, Himiko, the chieftain of Yamatai acted as the queen of a state-level society. Ishimoda further contended that different aspects of early Japanese society evolved at different speeds, and that in the second and third centuries diplomatic aspects developed far more quickly than internal ones, owing to Chinese influence.

Another important point of Ishimoda's proposal was that some structure of pre-state society remained, even after the society had grown into a mature state. He labeled this structure of pre-state society as *shuchōsei*. Although the term *shuchōsei* literally means chiefdom, Ishimoda's concept was very different from chiefdoms described in the neo-evolutionary anthropology popular in the United States in the 1960s. What he meant by *shuchōsei* was a local, autonomous polity that may be either stratified or egalitarian, and he argued that each *shuchōsei* played a major role in Yamato central control over local regions, even in the eighth century. He also pointed out that until the middle eighth century, kinship ties, along with affiliations determined by where one lived, were very important in the political structure.

Yoshida Akira (1926–2013) was heavily influenced by—and friends with—Ishimoda. Yoshida and Kondō were, moreover, colleagues at Okayama University, and his writings influenced Kondō's ideas, too. Like Ishimoda, Yoshida believed that different aspects of a society evolved at different speeds. Yet Yoshida's position on the state formation was very different from Ishimoda's, because Yoshida firmly considered Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* very important. He argued that the four attributes of the state were inseparable, and he would not accept such concepts as "tribal state" or "tribal confederacy state."[7] In other words, he considered a society to have reached the level of a state only when *all* the attributes of the state had appeared. This meant that kinship-based society had to be replaced by land-based society when a polity reached the state level.

Yoshida divided stratified society into two stages, pre-state and state. He classified this stratified society under Marx's "Asiatic Mode of Production." A key point of Yoshida's argument was that society was already stratified even before society evolved to the level of a state, and that social stratification evolved faster than other aspects of the society.[8]

Yoshida considered the Early Kofun era polity to have been a pre-state society, and labeled it as a "tribal confederacy."[9] Tsude Hiroshi (b. 1943) criticizes Yoshida's "tribal confederacy" model because the concept of a tribal confederacy was by Marxist definition an egalitarian society, and this term cannot therefore be used to describe a society evolving toward statehood.[10] It is important to note, however, that Yoshida's model of a tribal confederacy was a stratified society, which should be distinguished from Hara Hidesaburō's tribal confederacy model, to which we now turn.

Hara was another historian who influenced archaeologists. Unlike Ishimoda, Hara defines the state in terms of the political supra-structure, rather than the infrastructure such as an agricultural community.[11] Like Yoshida, Hara uses the term "tribal confederacy" to describe the Kofun era society.[12] Their use of the same term notwithstanding, what Hara means by "tribal confederacy" is less complex a society than under Yoshida's concept.

Hara also proposed a more abstract model of "quasi-state,"[13] although he does not particularly apply this model to Kofun-era society and his model is not cited by archaeologists at all. He

defines the quasi-state as a stage in which a polity evolves from an egalitarian to a stratified society. I consider his model valid because different aspects of a society evolve at different speeds and there should be considerable time difference from the point when one aspect of a society shows a feature of a state-level society until the point when all the aspects of the society are features of a state-level society. In this sense, his proposal is very similar to that of Tsude Hiroshi to be discussed below. A problem with both Hara's and Tsude's proposals is that, because both use the term "state" to describe a society that has not reached the state-level, the definition of a state may become unclear.

Debate over state formation: archaeologists' contributions

The early 1990s marked the dawn of a new epoch in Japanese studies of state formation, because of the publications of four important papers by Tsude Hiroshi, Iwanaga Shōzō (b. 1956), Niiro Izumi (b. 1952), and Suzuki Yasutami (b. 1942). Among the four, Suzuki alone is a historian, while the other three are all archaeologists. The archaeologists' publications of theoretical papers symbolize that Japanese archaeologists also make considerable contribution to understanding about the state formation process, without depending upon historical sources.[14]

In his 1991 paper, Tsude sharply criticized the Marxist model of tribal confederacy, contending that the model tends to overlook the possibility of clear social stratification as evidenced by considerable size differences in the burial mounds. He proposed that the Kofun era society be considered an early state, based on definitions proffered by Henry Claessen and Peter Skalnik.[15] In response to this criticism, Yoshida retorted that what he meant by "tribal confederacy" should be termed "chiefdom confederacy." Tsude's paper has stimulated Japanese archaeologists to be more involved in abstract discussions and to propose theoretical models of state and state formation processes.

Iwanaga's synthesis provides a framework for thoughts shared by both historians and archaeologists, one which encouraged theoretical discussions between the two fields. Both Niiro and Suzuki introduce Western theories of state and social evolution. Niiro applies the concept of "segmentary state" proposed by sociologist Aidan Southall to explain sixth and seventh century (Late Kofun era) Japan.[16] Suzuki applies the American neo-evolutionary concept of chiefdom to the Kofun era.

In the wake of these landmark studies, several models have been proposed to explain Kofun-era society. In 1992, archaeologist Shiraishi Taichirō (b. 1938) expressed his strong support for Suzuki's proposal for the Kofun era chiefdom model in the introduction to *Kofun no tsukurareta jidai*, a thirteen-volume series surveying all aspects of Kofun-era archaeology up to the beginning of the 1990s. This series serves as an outstanding introduction to Kofun-era archaeology.[17]

In 1996, cultural anthropologist Sasaki Kōmei (1929–2013) applied the "Galactic Polity" model proposed by social anthropologist Stanley J. Tambiah (1929–2014) to the Kofun-era society. Tambiah used his model to explain the nature of the Ayuthaya Kingdom in Thailand (1350–1767). In 1998, archaeologist Wada Seigo (b. 1947) proposed a "chiefdom confederacy" model, taking into consideration both clear social difference evidenced by mound sizes and considerable regional differences. Probably stimulated by Tambiah's model based on a Southeast Asian case, Fukunaga Shin'ya (b. 1959) introduced the possibility of applying the "theater state" model to the Early Kofun-era society. The model was originally proposed by cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1926–2006) to explain modern Bali society.[18]

In 2003, archaeologist Hirose Kazuo (b. 1947) published a highly provocative book, entitled *Zenpō-kōen-fun kokka* ("The Keyhole Mounded Tomb State"). Hirose, who majored in economics for his undergraduate study, defines a state as

> a community produced by people who maintain systems of division of labor, trade, and redistribution for the sake of shared profits, and as a group that possesses military organization, diplomatic rights, and ideological apparatus in order to protect the benefit of its own and to maintain the order of the group.

He emphasizes the aspect of "shared ideological apparatus"—keyhole-shaped tumuli, in the case of archaic Japan—so that the members of a state feel united.[19]

Such diversity in the models and hypotheses has resulted from differing positions concerning the strength of the central polity. Tsude's early state model, for example, is based on the premise that the central polity was very powerful. Tsude was a disciple of Kobayashi's at Kyoto University. On the other hand, those who emphasize the confederacy nature of the Kofun-era society consider most local polities to have been relatively autonomous, and the central polity not to have been very powerful, resulting in a considerable degree of regional differences within the Japanese archipelago. In recent years, some archaeologists have proposed dismissing the "perspective of the Yamato central polity," and relying on more regionally oriented perspectives.[20] I entirely agree with this.

In his influential 1991 paper, Tsude argued that Kofun period society was an early state that displayed eight key attributes: social stratification under a ruler; a taxation system made possible by surplus; a central polity with strong authority; a standing army; geographically based, rather than kinship-based membership; indirect control of local regions by intermediate-class elite; socially stratified trade networks; and a tribute system. Among these eight attributes, the "development of geographically based, rather than kinship-based membership" is the most difficult to test archaeologically, because bone preservation is poor in Japan due to acidic soil. Moreover, almost all the giant keyhole-shaped tumuli—those of more than 200 meters—are designated as imperial mausoleums, off-limits to archaeological excavations. Apart from this, Tsude's model may be substantiated by material evidence. For example, the most important material evidence for "social stratification under a ruler" is the differences in the forms and sizes of elite burial mounds, most notably the giant keyhole-shaped mounds at the top. Japanese archaeologists and historians commonly believe that those buried in circular and square burial mounds occupied a lower position within the elite class. The differences in the forms and sizes of the burial mounds are clearly correlated to the richness and poorness of the goods deposited with the dead.

Tambiah's model represents "a galactic picture of a central planet surrounded by differentiated satellites, which are more or less 'autonomous' entities held in orbit and within the sphere of influence of the center." Tambiah argues that kingdoms, countries, provinces, towns, capitals and regions consist of "center-oriented," as opposed to "bounded," space. Furthermore, he explains, territory is a variable space, and control over the territory diminishes as royal power radiates from a center. He sees "a fundamental duality concerning the constitution of the central or capital region of the king and its provinces, and the relations between them." While "a faithful reproduction on a reduced scale of the center in its outlying components" exists, "the satellites pose the constant threat of fission and incorporation in another sphere of influence."[21]

Tambiah's model is similar to the segmentary state model introduced by Niiro to Kofun-era archaeology. Tambiah's observation is especially applicable to the case of peripheral polities at the beginning of the Kofun period, wherein the central polity anchored in the Kinai remained dominant, but most local polities remained autonomous. These local polities interacted with one another on their own, very likely without knowledge of the central polity.

Tsude's model may account for the Kofun period society of the central polity in the fifth century and after. At the same time, this model does not pay enough attention to strong regional

differentiation in social organization and speeds of social evolution during the Kofun period. Most local societies during the period did not reach the level of early states. I would argue, rather, that most local societies were at the tribal level, and that some of them were still at the chiefdom level in the neo-evolutionary sense. Tambiah's "galactic polity" model, therefore, more successfully accounts for the sharing of a keyhole shape for elite burial mounds and at the same time the existence of autonomous local polities.

The early Kofun era

The presence of a central polity and clear social differentiation is evidenced by the difference in the size and forms of mounded tombs. For example, in the Nara Basin, there was clear differentiation in the size and shape of tumuli from the beginning of the Kofun era. Keyhole-shaped tombs of more than 200 meters contrast with smaller keyhole-shaped tumuli of 100–150 meters, and with circular mounded tombs less than 50 meters in diameter. Japanese archaeologists consider these differences to have been a reflection of social status within the elite class because larger quantities of bronze mirrors were deposited in larger keyhole-shaped mounded tombs.[22]

For example, excavations of the 207-meter-long Sakurai-Chausu-yama tomb resulted in the discovery of fragments from more than eighty bronze mirrors, including twenty-six *sankakubuchi-shinjū-kyō* mirrors, nine Eastern Han Chinese mirrors, and ten Japanese mirrors modeled after Chinese prototypes. Since this tomb has been heavily looted, it is likely that even more bronze mirrors were initially deposited. This discovery suggests that even greater quantities of bronze mirrors might be expected from contemporaneous tombs measuring over 250 meters. These monumental keyhole-shaped tumuli, however, are designated as imperial mausoleums and are consequently off-limits to excavation.

Located two miles north of Sakurai-Chausu-yama, in the southeastern Nara Basin, the Kurozuka tomb measures 132 meters in length. From within the pit-style burial chamber, archaeologists discovered one Eastern Han Chinese bronze mirror inside the wooden coffin and thirty-three *sankakubuchi-shinju-kyo* mirrors encircling the outside of the coffin. Since the burial chamber had not been looted, the mirrors were discovered intact. These examples illustrate a strong correlation between burial-mound size and the quantity of bronze mirrors deposited.

In addition to differences in size, tumuli shape is also believed to reflect differences in the social status of the interred. The keyhole shape with a circular rear mound is thought to have been reserved for the highest social status among the ruling class, while the square rear mound keyhole-shape tombs contain occupants of the second highest social status. This interpretation is based on the fact that the largest square rear mound keyhole-shaped tomb, the Nishiyama-zuka tumulus (in the eastern Nara Basin), measures 180 meters—which, while of considerable size, is much smaller than the largest keyhole-shaped tombs with round rear mounds. Four keyhole-shaped tumuli with square rear mounds exist in the southeastern Nara Basin, which displays a great concentration of keyhole-shaped mounded tombs. They measure 145, 115, 110, and 90 meters in length, belonging to the second tier, in terms of size hierarchy.

Circular- and square-mounded tombs measuring less than 50 meters in diameter or per side also existed. In the southwestern Nara Basin, an undisturbed square-mounded tumulus dating to the beginning of the fourth century was excavated. This tomb, Kamotsuba No. 1, measured only 20 meters per side and only four *sankakubuchi-shinju-kyo* mirrors were deposited with the dead. It is also noteworthy that instead of a stone burial chamber, a wooden coffin was encased in clay; the burial facility was very simple and its construction did not require a large investment of labor.

These examples in the Nara Basin are solid evidence for social stratification under a ruler (Tsude's first attribute). Since this three-tiered elite hierarchy represented by different tomb

shapes and sizes is absent in other regions of Japan in the Early Kofun era, this would be good evidence for the existence of a strong central polity (Tsude's third attribute). The appearance of elite mansions mentioned earlier is also evidence for social stratification. Furthermore, the construction of 50-to-100-meter keyhole-shaped tumuli in various regions of Japan in the Early Kofun era may be evidence for "indirect control of local regions by intermediate-class elite." Nevertheless, evidence of other attributes is not apparent for the Early Kofun era.

The situation was very different in eastern Japan. For example, at the Kusakari site, in Chiba Prefecture, 550 kilometers east of Nara, archaeologists discovered one low, keyhole-shaped burial mound, surrounded by many low, square burial mounds. Since a keyhole-shaped tomb was built, "a faithful reproduction on a reduced scale of the center in its outlying components" existed in this region. Indeed, the scale was considerably reduced. Yet, social stratification was not well-developed. The leader, presumably buried in the low, keyhole-shaped burial mound, was still a part of the local community, and the construction of the low burial mound did not require communal labor.

In peripheral regions of Japan, local polities seem to be autonomous or, in Tambiah's terms, more or less autonomous, differentiated satellites. Evidence for this exists in the case of local pottery production in the middle and third century in northern Kyushu, across from the southern Korean peninsula. Numerous cooking jars produced in the Kinai region, where the central polity was located in the middle third century, were transported to various places in northern Kyushu. They were locally imitated, and subsequently locally produced. Furthermore, a few local polities began to export their local copies of the Kinai-type cooking jars to Iki island and the southern Korean peninsula. This clearly indicates that the central polity in the Kinai at that time did not monopolize interaction with the Korean peninsula. It is also probable that from the perspective of the local northern Kyushu polities, the border between the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago was not clear.[23] It seems that even in the third century local polities in northern Kyushu were as close to the Korean peninsula as to the Kinai region. Indeed, the polity was "center-oriented" space, as opposed to "bounded" space.

The Middle Kofun period

During the Middle Kofun era, several attributes of early states as defined by Tsude appeared. In the fifth century, keyhole-shaped tombs became even larger. The largest, Daisen tomb in Sakai City, Osaka is 460 meters long, enclosed by three moats. This is indeed good evidence for social stratification with a ruler and presumably of a central polity with strong authority.

A taxation system made possible by production surplus may be evidenced by the discovery of unusually large storehouses. At the Hōenzaka site, in Osaka (in the close vicinity of the Naniwa imperial palace site and of Osaka Castle), sixteen storehouses of 93 square meters each were excavated. These were all dated to the fifth century. If we assume the height of the storehouses to have been 4.5 meters, the sixteen storehouses would have held 37,000 *koku* (about 6674 cubic meters) of rice.[24] Archaeologists had no clue to understanding what was actually stored there, however. If we assume that cloth, salt, iron ingots, or iron weapons had also been stored, the total value of commodities stored would have been even greater.[25]

Possible evidence for a standing army includes the large quantities of iron armor deposited with the dead. In the fifth century, iron armor became the premier elite status symbol, replacing the bronze mirrors of the Early Kofun period. Although all the fifth-century keyhole-shaped tumuli of more than 200 meters remain off-limits to excavation, the results of excavations of medium-sized tombs give clues to speculate about the quantity of the iron armor deposited in giant keyhole-shaped mounded tombs.

An example of a medium-sized keyhole-shaped tumulus is Kurohime-yama, in Sakai City, Osaka. It is 144 meters long, built in the second quarter of the fifth century. An excavation of a pit-style burial chamber in the frontal mound resulted in the discovery of twenty-four sets of iron armor. All twenty-four sets consisted of iron helmets and iron cuirasses, and twelve of them were accompanied by gorgets and shoulder protectors. To date, twenty-four remains the largest number of armors discovered in a single tomb. It is important to note that the twenty-four sets were discovered in the frontal mound, while mounded tombs were dedicated to the occupant of the rear mound. In other words, the iron armor was deposited in a subordinate burial chamber. An even larger quantity of iron armor would likely have been deposited in the main burial chamber, the circular rear mound, which had been destroyed before the archaeological excavation of 1946. This also leads to a further speculation that far larger quantity of iron armor would have been deposited in the giant tumuli more than 200 meters in length.

Another archaeological discovery that gives clues to understanding fifth-century military organization resulted from the Nonaka square tumulus, 28 meters per side, located near the 224-meter Furuichi-Hakayama keyhole-shaped tomb, in Fujiidera City, Osaka. Excavation of the Nonaka tomb resulted in the discovery of one set of iron armor in a wooden coffin (probably worn by the individual buried therein), 373 iron arrowheads in a presumably wooden box placed next to the coffin, and ten additional sets of iron armor in another presumably wooden box placed next to the box containing the arrowheads.

This quantity is greater than in the case of the more or less contemporary 159-meter-long Mozu-Ōtsukayama tomb. In the course of deconstructing this keyhole-shaped tomb in Sakai City, archaeologists discovered eight clay coffins. In coffin No. 1, an iron cuirass was discovered, and in coffin No. 2, five cuirasses, tassets, and greaves were discovered. This comparison strongly suggests that whoever was buried in the Nonaka tumulus was in a position very important to military affairs.

The position of the Nonaka square tumulus is evidence for one more aspect of the political structure in the fifth century, the emergence of a bureaucracy. The giant keyhole-shaped tumuli of the fifth century are distinguished by accompanying small circular or square mounded tombs, which are referred to as *baichō* or "satellite tombs." The practice of building satellite tombs existed only in the fifth century. Archaeologists tend to assume that, while those buried in the 150-meter-class keyhole-shaped tumuli and the circular and square mounded tombs were middle- and lower-level elites somewhat independent from the highest-ranking chief, those buried in satellite tombs were direct vassals of the highest-ranking chiefs. Some archaeologists further speculate that those buried in these satellite tombs were bureaucrats serving the chief, each carrying out different functions.[26]

This relationship between the paramount chief and his bureaucrats was replicated in a few local polities, such as Kibi (150 km west of the Kinai, in presen-day Okayama prefecture). This indicates that even in the Middle Kofun period, some local polities were still autonomous and could replicate the political structure of the center. This would be evidence for indirect control of local regions by intermediate-class elites.

In the Middle Kofun era, considerable evidence for socially stratified trade networks and, to some extent, a tribute system appeared. Based on discoveries of large quantities of iron armor, archaeologists suspect that, although we have not yet unearthed a workshop for armor production, the production of iron armor was monopolized by the central polity. The production of the jade and talc beads, essential for rituals in the Kofun era, also came to be under centralized control in the fifth century. While the production of jade objects took place in the Hokuriku region (the Sea of Japan coastal region of central Honshu) where jade was quarried in the Early Kofun era, the production of jade and talc beads took place in Nara during the Middle Kofun era. Although

bead production also took place in Izumo, on the Sea of Japan coastal region of western Honshu, throughout the Kofun era, the large-scale production in Nara must have put the central polity in a dominant and advantageous position over local polities.

Toward the end of the fourth century, methods of stoneware production were introduced from the Korean peninsula. This stoneware, now referred to as *sueki* or *sue* ware, was fired in kilns at a temperature higher than 1000 degrees centigrade. The earliest-dated *sueki* kilns are at the Obadera site, in Sakai City, Osaka. Since the Obadera site is situated near the Mozu tomb group, where the giant Daisen tomb is located, it is highly likely that the introduction of stoneware production was initiated by the central polity. At the beginning of the fifth century, *sueki* production took place at a few other places in Japan. By the middle fifth century, however, *sueki* production at the Suemura site, in Sakai City and very likely under centralized control, drastically increased, and *sueki* production at other places declined. This suggests that the central polity gained a more advantageous position over local polities through the distribution of *sueki*.

The central polity also introduced horses and methods of raising horses from the Korean peninsula at about the same time as the new stoneware. Because horses were not native to Japan, Korean equestrian specialists were invited to Yamato as well. At the Shitomiya-Kita site, in Shijōnawate City of northern Osaka, archaeologists discovered the earliest types of horse trappings, including bits, wooden saddles, and wooden stirrups, as well as locally made Korean ceramics and ceramics for salt production. The site is believed to have been a pasture under the control of the central polity. In the vicinity of the site are small circular tumuli, with horses buried in pits at the foot of a few of these tombs or in moats enclosing them.

In the fifth century, there were also pastures for raising horses in other regions of Japan. One such pasture was presumably located in the Nagano Basin, in the northern central highlands of Japan, although the site of a pasture in the basin may have been washed away by the repeated floods of the Chikuma (Shinano) River flowing through the area. The southeastern slope enclosing the Nagano Basin features the Ōmuro cairn and earthen mound cluster. Cairns were constructed from the middle fifth to the early sixth century, and earthen mounds from the middle sixth century to the late seventh century. The name Ōmuro is listed as one of the national pastures in the ninth century source *Engishiki*. Because cairns are very rare in Japan, but commonly found on the Korean peninsula, some Japanese archaeologists have assumed that immigrants from the Korean peninsula were buried in cairns.

Archaeological excavations of Tomb No. 168, a cairn dated to the third quarter of the fifth century, resulted in the discovery of a ceramic figurine of a horse at the foot of the cairn. A fragment of a similar ceramic figurine of a horse was collected near Tomb D. At Tomb 196, a cairn dated to the end of the fifth century, the earliest type of horse trapping was excavated from the stone coffin. At Tomb No. 186, an earthen mound dated to the end of the sixth century, the skull of a horse was discovered. One zooarchaeologist concludes that the horse's head had been cut off and then placed on the slope of the mound. This treatment of horses is clearly distinguished from the pattern apparent in northern Osaka, where horses were buried in pits at the foot of mounded tombs.[27]

Based on the results of long-term excavations at Omuro, I have proposed that local elites in the Nagao Basin invited Korean equestrian specialists independently from the central polity. In order to produce large number of horses in a short period of time, it is likely that the central polity encouraged a few local chieftains, who had independently interacted with the Korean peninsula since the late Yayoi era, to invite equestrian specialists from the Korean peninsula. The possibility exists that equestrian specialists and horses arrived in the Nagano Basin directly from the Korean peninsula via the Sea of Japan and the Shinano River. If local elites in Japan and local elites on the Korean peninsula interacted with one another on their own, it is clear that the central polity at that time did not fully monopolize diplomatic rights.

This autonomous nature of local polities in the fifth century may also be reflected in different patterns of interaction between the central polity and various local polities. In a few cases, the central polity maintained a kind of gunboat diplomacy, wherein the Yamato court dispatched influential military leaders who were later buried with dozens of sets of iron armor in stone coffins of the same style as the central chieftain. In most cases, the central chieftain apparently gave additional armors to second-ranking local chiefs as well. Indeed, in fifth century sites in the Kanto, iron armor is often discovered in small circular mounds, rather than in large keyhole-shaped tumuli. It is possible that the central polity tried to lure the attention of the highest ranking local chiefs far away from the Kinai. In still-other instances, the central polity may have simply given out symbolic titles to local elites.[28]

In this period, while the construction of keyhole-shaped burial mounds was just getting started in some regions, it temporarily ceased in others. It may be possible to interpret the former cases as reflections of a phenomenon in which local elites finally became incorporated into a confederation led by the central polity. For the latter cases, I would propose the possibility that local polities came to be temporarily separated from the confederation.

The Late Kofun era

In the sixth century—the Late Kofun era—society transformed drastically, as is clearly reflected in several major changes in mortuary practices. These changes include a decline in the construction of large keyhole-shaped tumuli, a drastic increase in the construction of minor circular burial mounds in clusters (referred to as *gunshūfun*), and the adoption of corridor-style horizontal burial chambers (referred to as *yokoana-shiki sekishitu*) that could be opened for additional interments after the initial burial.

While the decline in the construction of keyhole-shape tumuli indicates that such tombs came to be restricted to fewer, and even higher-ranking elites, the appearance of *gunshūfun* indicates that far more people came to be buried in mounded tombs in the Late Kofun era than before. Scholars interpret *gunshūfun* as a reflection of the central polity incorporating more people into its own social system, and of more people rising to the social class that allowed them to be buried in mounded tombs.[29] It may also be that ideology of the central polity changed, and keyhole-shaped tumuli were no longer as important as symbols of power as they had been in the Early and Middle Kofun eras.

The adoption of the corridor-style horizontal burial chambers was important because the size of the chamber would become a status symbol, regardless of the form and size of the tomb itself. This drastic change may have been initiated by King Keitai (r. 507–531 or 534). For the first time in the Kofun era, burial chambers of the same structure and style were constructed in all mounded tombs, from the largest keyhole-shaped tumuli—such as Keitai's own—to small circular tombs less than 20 meters in diameter.

The adoption of the corridor-style horizontal burial chamber was in a sense inevitable, because kinship structure changed in the early sixth century. According to a very innovative study by Tanaka Yoshiyuki (1953–2014), while brothers and sisters had been buried together until the beginning of the sixth century, fathers and children who were not selected to be the heir came to be buried together from the early sixth century on. From the middle sixth century, mothers were also buried with their husbands.[30] In other words, burial chambers had to have a structure that would allow additional interments, resulting in a corridor-style burial chamber that could be reopened later.

From the middle sixth century, the assemblage of grave goods to some extent determined the social status of elites, which was correlated to the size of corridor-style horizontal burial chambers.

The highest rank was symbolized by decorated swords. While keyhole-shaped tumuli comprised only 1 percent of sixth-century mounded tombs, 25 percent of the tombs (thirty-nine in all) from which decorated swords have been excavated are keyhole-shaped. The rest are large circular mounded tombs of more than 30 meters in diameter. Moreover, sarcophagi with gambrel-roof lids are found in the corridor-style burial chambers of the majority of the tombs in the region of the central polity from which decorated swords have been excavated. Decorated swords are often accompanied by iron armor, bronze mirrors, bronze bowls, and sometimes gilt-bronze crowns and gilt-bronze decorated shoes.[31]

While corridor-style horizontal burial chambers dominated until the middle seventh century, the construction of keyhole-shaped tumuli ended in most of the regions in Japan in the fourth quarter of the sixth century, and at the beginning of the seventh century in a few regions of the Kanto. The last (newest) keyhole-shaped tomb in the Nara Basin was the Gojōno-Maruyama (or Mise-Maruyama) tomb, 310 meters in length. Some scholars believe it to have been Emperor Kinmei's mausoleum, although the Imperial Household Agency (Kunaichō) designates another late sixth-century tumulus as Kinmei's.

In the third quarter of the sixth century, large circular and square tombs gradually replaced keyhole-shaped mounds for the burials of very high-ranking nobles in the Nara Basin. One piece of the background to the decline of keyhole-shaped tumuli may be the introduction of Buddhism to Japan from Paekche, Korea around this era. In 588, the construction of the first major Buddhist temple, Asuka-dera, began in the southeastern corner of the Nara Basin, an area called Asuka, where palaces were constructed in the seventh century. In the seventh century, erecting Buddhist temples became the premier status symbol, replacing the construction of mounded tombs. The decline of keyhole-shaped tumuli in the middle sixth century and after was, in a sense, a prelude to the practice of erecting Buddhist temples in the following century.

The *Nihon shoki* mentions several *miyake*, or royal estate in regions, far away from Nara, such as in Musashi (in present-day Saitama prefecture) and Tsukushi (in present-day Fukuoka prefecture) during the reign of Emperor Ankan (traditional dates, 534–535). *Miyake* were complexes of rice paddies, store houses, and office buildings in which the managers of the rice paddies worked, and the rice paddies were under the direct control of the newly restyled imperial court. In addition to the *miyake*, the central court directly controlled many aspects of production and distribution, including trade, by the middle sixth century. This is archaeologically evidenced by the spatial distribution of high-quality gold or gilt-bronze objects far away from Nara.

Even in this period, however, some local polities in eastern Japan remained somewhat autonomous. Especially in a region fifty miles northeast of Tokyo, the old province of Hitachi, or what is now Ibaraki prefecture, the construction of keyhole-shaped tumuli continued until the beginning of the seventh century. This region also resisted the adoption of the corridor-style horizontal burial chambers, and maintained the type of burial chambers typical of the fourth and fifth centuries, until the third quarter of the sixth century.

In a few areas in eastern Japan, locally paramount chiefs were buried in simple tunnel tombs dug into cliffs, without any mounds at all. This is evidenced by the deposit of gilt-bronze decorated swords, a symbol of authority since the middle sixth century. In these areas, the second-ranking chiefs were buried in mounded tombs. It is also the case in these areas that the significance of keyhole-shaped burial mounds as a status symbol was not adopted.[32]

In sum, while the construction of keyhole-shaped tumuli declined in the sixth century, control by the central polity over local regions became stronger. In this sense, society and polity in the sixth and seventh century may have crossed the threshold into statehood, although archaeological evidence for a standing army is not apparent. Still, some local polities remained somewhat

autonomous, and in this sense, Southall's segmentary state model and Tambiah's galactic polity model are applicable to the society of the sixth and early seventh centuries.

As the foregoing discussion indicates, the more than three hundred years of Kofun-era history is characterized by a process through which the central polity gained control over other regions. Yamato dominion evolved geometrically, from a point (in the Early Kofun era) to a line (sometime in Middle Kofun times) to a space or sphere (in the Late Kofun period).[33] In the fourth century, the presence of the central polity in local regions was represented by a single keyhole-shaped tomb. In the fifth century, a series of keyhole-shaped tumuli along the coastal region of the Inland Sea symbolized the control by the central polity over regions along the Inland Sea. In the sixth century, the central polity successfully established *miyake* in various regions, which enabled it to control these regions directly.

Notes

1 Takesue Jun'ichi, "Sōko no kanri shutai," and "Yayoi kangō shūraku to toshi."
2 Tsude Hiroshi, *Nihon Nōkō shakai no seiritsu katei*; Terasawa Kaoru, "Shūraku kara toshi e."
3 Wada Seigo, "Mukō shi Itsukahara kofun no sokuryō chōsa yori"; Hōjō Yoshitaka, "Funkyū ni hyōji sareta zenpō-kōen-fun no teishiki to sono hyōka" and "The Study of Keyhole Shaped Tombs and Japanese Archaeology."
4 Kobayashi Yukio, *Kofun jidai no kenkyū*. Chapter 3 has been translated into English by Walter Edwards as "Treatise on Duplicate Mirrors."
5 For a summary of the debate in Japanese, see Matsugi Takehiko, "Kokka keisei"; Hōjō Yoshitaka, "Kokka"; Sasaki Ken'ichi, "Kodai kokka ron no genjō." In English, see Tanaka Migaku et al., "Archaeology."
6 Yoshida Akira, *Nihon kodai kokka seiritsu-shi ron*; Hara Hidesaburō, "Nihon rettō niokeru mikai to bunmei."
7 Yoshida, *Nihon kodai kokka seiritsu-shi ron*, 23–31.
8 Yoshida, *Nihon kodai shakai kōsei-shi ron*.
9 Yoshida, *Nihon kodai kokka seiritsu-shi ron*.
10 Tsude Hiroshi, "Kofun jidai shuchō keifu no keizoku to danzetsu." Also published in English as "Chiefly Lineages in Kofun Period Japan: Political Relations between Centre and Region."
11 Hara Hidesaburō, "Nihon kodai kokka kenkyū no rironteki zentei."
12 Hara, "Nihon rettō niokeru mikai to bunmei"; Hara Hidesaburō, "Ajiateki seisan yōshiki hihan josetsu: 'shokeitai' no rikai ni motozuku kisoteki shogainen no saikentō."
13 Hara, "Nihon kodai kokka kenkyū no rironteki zentei," 17.
14 Tsude Hiroshi, "Nihon kodai no kokka keiseiron josetsu"; translated into English by Walter Edwards as "Early State Formation in Japan." Iwanaga Shōzō, "Nihon ni okeru kaikyū shakai keisei ni kansuru gakusetsu-shi-teki kentō josetsu"; Niiro Izumi, "6・7 seiki no henkaku to shakai no dōkō"; Suzuki Yasutami, "Rekishigaku to minzokugaku (bunka jinruigaku)."
15 Henry Claessen and Peter Skalnik, *The Early States* and *The Study of the Early State*.
16 Aidan Southall, "The Segmentary State in Africa and Asia."
17 See, for example, Shiraishi Taichirō, "Sōron."
18 Sasaki Kōmei, "Shuchōsei kara kuni e"; Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Culture, Thought, and Social Action*; Wada Seigo, "Kofun jidai ha kokka dankai ka?"; Fukunaga Shin'ya, "Kofun no shutsugen to chūō seiken no girei kanri"; Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theater State in Nineteenth Century Bali*.
19 Hirose Kazuo, *Zenpō-kōen-fun kokka*.
20 See, for example, Hōjō Yoshitaka et al., *Kofun jidai zō wo minaosu*.
21 Tambiah, *Culture, Thought, and Social Action*. The quoted passages appear on pages 261, and 260–261.
22 A reasonable introduction to Early Kofun era history in English is Gina L. Barnes, *State Formation in Japan: Emergence of a 4th-Century Ruling Elite*. This work depends heavily upon a framework presented by Terasawa Kaoru in *Ōken tanjō*. Terasawa's framework is, however, not well-accepted among Japanese archaeologists. A serious problem of Barnes' book is that she virtually ignores the theoretical contributions to the state formation debate of other Japanese scholars presented here.

23 Sasaki Ken'ichi, "Kofun shutsugen zengo niokeru Kinai-gata kame-gata doki no seihō kakusan nikansuru kenkyū."
24 *Koku* was a standard unit of volume measurement applied to agricultural production and tax assessments throughout Japanese history. One *koku* was equivalent to approximately 278 liters.
25 Naoki Kōjirō and Ogasawara Yoshihiko, *Kura to kodai ōken*.
26 Nishikawa Hiroshi, "Baichō ron josetsu"; Fujita Kazutaka, "Baichō kō."
27 Sasaki Ken'ichi et al., *Shinano Ōmuro tsumi'ishizuka kofun-gun no kenkyū*.
28 Fujita Kazutaka, "Kofun jidai ni-okeru buki, bugu hoyū keitai no hensen."
29 Nishijima Sadao, "Kofun to Yamato seiken"; Kondō Yoshirō, *Sarayama kofun-gun no kenkyū*.
30 Tanaka Yoshiyuki, *Kofun jidai shinzoku kōzō no kenkyū*. Tanaka's method for reconstructing kinship consists of statistically analyzing the distance between incisors and second molars. Among those who are kin-related, the distance between incisors and second molars tends to be the same. His work has been further developed by Seike Akira, *Kofun jidai no maisō genri to shinzoku kōzō*.
31 Niiro Izumi, "Sōshoku-tsuki tachi to kofun jidai kōki no heisei."
32 Suzuki Kazunao, "Tōkai chihō niokeru kōki kofun no tokushitsu."
33 Kamei Kiichirō, "Yamato ōken no Kyushu shihai."

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6
The *ritsuryō* state

Sakaue Yasutoshi, with Kristopher L. Reeves

During the late seventh and early eighth centuries, the Japanese state compiled and promulgated a series of legal codes based largely on Chinese models developed under the Sui and Tang dynasties. These codes are divided into two groups: the first, the *ritsu*, corresponds to modern penal codes, while the second, the *ryō*, represented a wide variety of administrative regulations. The term *ritsuryō* state (*ritsuryō kokka*), then, refers to the polity that held sway over Japan during the first half of the classical era, administered by codes of law.[1]

Although the *ritsuryō* codes were not formally abolished until the early Meiji period, the *ritsuryō state* ended centuries before that. There is, however, considerable scholarly debate concerning the time of its demise, beginning with one view that marks the end in the sweeping alterations to *ritsuryō* institutions of the tenth century.

Early Chinese legal codes

China began referring to clusters of provisions dealing primarily with penal law as *lü* (J: *ritsu*) at least as early as the Warring States period (the late fourth to late third centuries BCE). Shortly thereafter, during the Han dynasty (the late third century BCE through the early third century CE), ordinances issued by the emperor were collected and referred to as *ling* (J: *ryō*). The Western Jin dynasty (265–316) inaugurated the practice of organizing legal codes into the two major divisions of *lü* and *ling*, from whence we get the Japanese term *ritsuryō*, with the promulgation of the Taishi *lüling*, or Taishi legal code, in 278. Under the Sui dynasty (581–618), the Kaihuang code (promulgated in 581) was accompanied by a collection of imperial edicts, called *ge* (J: *kyaku*), revising provisions of the codes, and a more detailed set of operational regulations necessary for the execution of the codes and the *ge*, known as *shi* (J: *shiki*). This four-part structure was also followed by the Tang dynasty (618–907) in compiling its legal codes.

Under the Sui and Tang, revised legal codes were drawn up and enacted upon the enthronement of almost every new emperor. Thus the Sui issued the aforementioned Kaihuang code during the reign of Emperor Wen (541–604, r. 581–604), as well as the Daye code during the reign of Emperor Yang (569–618, r. 604–618). Similarly, the Tang promulgated the Wude code under Emperor Gaozu (566–635, r. 618–626); the Zhenguan code under Emperor Taizong (599–649, r. 626–649); the Yonghui code under Emperor Gaozong (628–683, r. 649–683); and

the Chuigong code, compiled during the reign of Emperor Zhongzong (656–710, r. 684 and again 705–710) but enacted during that of Empress Wu Zetian (624–705. r. 690–705); as well as the Shenlong code (also during the reign of Emperor Zhongzong). Emperor Xuanzong (685–762, r. 712–756) alone oversaw the compilation and enactment of three legal codes, in the third (715), seventh (719), and twenty-fifth (737) year of the lengthy Kaiyuan era (713–741).

The last of these, known as the Kaiyuan code, was exceptionally sophisticated and proved to be the apogee of Chinese legal codes. Setting aside alterations to the titles of government offices, official ranks, provinces, and counties; and slight revisions in the wording of certain regulations, the more fundamental aspects of national governance—the central and local bureaucracies, family and tax registers, the system of land division, the social class system, and the institution of a royal guard—remained largely unchanged thereafter.

By comparing fragments discovered at Dunhuang with a document entitled *Gu tanglü shuyi* ("Commentary on the old Tang *lü* regulations," an annotation of the Kaiyuan code, completed in 737), we have been able to successfully reconstruct all of the Tang *lü* regulations. By contrast, the second part of these same Tang legal codes, the *ling* regulations, were lost at a relatively early date. Niida Noboru and Ikeda On searched through Dunhuang fragments and quotations embedded within numerous documents in hopes of reconstructing the *ling* regulations.[2] Then Dai Jianguo, a Chinese scholar working at the end of the twentieth century, discovered a Ming era copy of a Northern Song legal code in China's oldest extant library, Tianyige at Ningbo. As a result of Dai's efforts, reconstruction of the Tang *ling* has since progressed at a rapid pace.[3]

Compilation of *ritsuryō* legal codes in Japan

With the rise and expansion of the Sui and Tang empires in China came a general sense of increased tension that reverberated throughout all of East Asia. The three Korean kingdoms and Japan began working diligently toward the establishment of centralized state government, along imperial Chinese models. Empress Suiko's (554–628, r. 593–628) reign witnessed the first official Japanese envoy to Sui China, the compilation of a "Seventeen Article Constitution," and the introduction of a system of official ranks divided into twelve tiers.[4] Some two decades thereafter, the downfall of the main lineage of the Soga family was followed by an extensive round of political transformations, including the construction of a new capital at Naniwa (in modern-day Osaka), the establishment of a system of local administration that divided land into districts.[5]

The *Nihon shoki*, the court's first official historical chronicle (released in 720) and our principal source for the events of the seventh century, asserts that the key elements and principles of the *ritsuryō* state were introduced at a stroke, in a four-clause edict issued on new year's day in 646, in the wake of the spectacular Taika coup d'etat led by imperial prince Naka no Ōe (later Emperor Tenji; 626–671, r. 662–671). Modern scholarship has, however, demonstrated that the reform process was far more gradual, and far less uniform in pace, than the *Nihon shoki* account implies. Historians today identify three major waves of reform activity.[6]

The first occurred in the early years following the Taika coup. But while this event resulted in a major shift of power within the court and decisively committed the court itself to Chinese-inspired political reorganization, the central government did not, at this time, yet possess the power needed to fully implement the measures described in the Taika edicts, and the reform movement eventually flagged.

Nevertheless, a second burst of reform activity began in the 660s, when Emperor Tenji, having suffered a horrible loss at the Battle of Paekchon River in 663, exploited widespread fear of the waxing power of the Tang and imminent Chinese invasion of Japan to renew enthusiasm for centralizing reforms.[7] In 670, the Kōgo Register (Kōgo *nenjaku*) was compiled as a means of

registering families on a national level. One year later the *ryō* regulations of the Ōmi code were enacted, providing a greater degree of organization to Japan's central bureaucracy.

Tenji's death in 671 led to the outbreak of civil war between his son, Prince Ōtomo, and his younger brother, Prince Ōama. Ōama's victory in this conflict, known as the Jinshin War, and his subsequent enthronement as Emperor Tenmu (r. 672–686), ushered in the third wave of *ritsuryō* development, under Tenmu and his consort and successor, Empress Jitō (645–702, r. 686–697). The *ryō* regulations of the Kiyomihara code were enacted and distributed to the various offices in 689, and the Kōin Register (Kōin *nenjaku*) was produced the following year, initiating the practice of compiling national household registers, upon which the distribution of farm land was to be based, every six years. The Kiyomihara codes also instituted the practice of promoting courtiers to higher official ranks every six years.

Both the *ryō* and the *ritsu* regulations enshrined within the Taihō legal code (enacted in 701 and 702 respectively) were formulated based on the Yonghui *ling* regulations and *Yongkui lü*, albeit adapted in accordance with the unique experiences and national sociopolitical environment of Japan. This last development marks the solid establishment of the Japanese *ritsuryō* state.[8]

This Taihō code was followed half a century later by the Yōrō code—the first version of the *ritsuryō* that survives to the present—which took inspiration from the first of Emperor Xuanzong's three Kaiyuan era *ling* regulations (compiled in 715). Fujiwara Fuhito (659–720) played a leading role in the initial formation of the Yōrō code, although he passed away before its completion. Nearly three decades after Fuhito's death, in 757, this Yōrō legal code was at last promulgated, and would remain in effect until its abolition in early modern times.[9]

Early scholarship on the formation of the *ritsuryō* state

A great deal of research has been done regarding both the compilation and enactment of the various Japanese *ritsuryō* codes. Noteworthy prewar Japanese scholars in this field include Nakada Kaoru (1877–1967) and Takikawa Masajirō (1897–1992). Nakada pioneered comparative study of Chinese and Japanese *ritsuryō* codes, and examined documents stored in the Nara-period Shōsōin archive, proving conclusively that the Yōrō legal codes, although compiled in 718, were not actually enacted until the year 757; while Takikawa constructed a general history of Japanese *ryō* regulations, beginning with the Ōmi *ryō*, followed by the Kiyomihara *ryō*, the Taihō *ryō*, and concluding with the Yōrō *ryō*. Takikawa also worked on reconstructing the Taihō *ryō*, as well as providing an overview of the original political agenda behind the compilation of the Yōrō *ryō*.[10] Mention must also be made here of Sakamoto Tarō, who analyzed developments between the era of Shōtoku Taishi and the enactment of the Taihō *ritsuryō*, looking closely at the advance of centralized authority and *ritsuryō* state formation.[11]

Post-war scholarship may be said to have begun with Inoue Mitsusada (1917–1983) and the debate inspired as a result of his questions regarding the ancient system of administrative divisions of land (*gun* and *hyō*).[12] This debate led, among other things, to an enthusiastic criticism of historical records pertaining to the Taika Reform edicts. While the principal regulations of these edicts, as preserved in *Nihon shoki*, are still recognized as being more-or-less faithful representations of the original text of 646, it is now agreed that the subordinate clauses (known as *hanjō*) are later embellishments taken from the Taihō *ryō*, and were not included in the original edicts.[13] Moreover, it has since become clear that what had been known in the pre-Taika era as provinces (*kuni*) overseen by hereditarily appointed provincial administrators (*kuni no miyatsuko*) were, around the year 649, during the reign of Emperor Kōtoku (597–654, r. 645–654), divided into smaller administrative units, known as *kohori* or *hyō*, governed by officials newly appointed by the central government.[14]

The Ōmi and Kiyomihara *ryō*

Although the Ōmi codes themselves do not survive, we may deduce their content from fragmentary evidence found in both *Nihon shoki* and *Tōshi Kaden*, a history of the early Fujiwara family compiled around 760. According to Aoki Kazuo, these regulations, recorded as having been enacted in 671, did not initially comprise a systematic legal code, but represented at most a patchwork collection of preexisting stand-alone regulations. It was not until after the Jinshin War, during the reign of Emperor Tenmu, that efforts were first made to organize this medley of regulations into a systematic legal code, a project that was finally realized in the form of the Kiyomihara *ryō*. As noted above, these last regulations initiated the practice of regularly compiling nationwide household registers and reevaluating allotments of farm land once every six years. Despite the establishment of these *ryō* statutes, a separate set of Kiyomihara *ritsu* was never compiled. The functions of the latter part of the code were supplied by a series of regulations taken from Tang legal codes.[15]

Taking up where Aoki left off, Hayakawa Shōhachi argued that the bureaucratic structure during the reign of Emperor Tenmu differed substantially from that of the Taihō and Yōrō codes. He maintained, for example, that although the institutions of Tenmu's court did include familiar names, such as *daijōkan* (the Council of State of the mature *ritsuryō* era)—evidenced by a record of *daijōkan* officials participating in Tenmu's funeral rites—this institution was composed solely of royal servants, called councilors (*nagon*), while imperial decrees were promulgated to the various offices and provinces by a parallel body, the Office of Major Controllers (*daibenkan*). Hayakawa concluded that the bureaucratic system of the post-Taihō era originated in the Kiyomihara codes.[16]

Inoue Mitsusada and Kishi Toshio, however, noted early on that the Kōgo Register, compiled in 670 during the reign of Emperor Tenji, is believed to have been integral to the enactment of the Ōmi regulations.[17] Inoue further argued that evidence obtained from wooden tablets (*mokkan*) used for official record keeping proves that the practice of organizing household registers into units of fifty households—a procedure that is supposed to have been introduced with the Kōgo Register—was adopted no later than the early years of Emperor Tenji's reign.[18]

Inasmuch, therefore, as the system of population management developed during Tenmu's reign was based on the Kōgo Register, and that this register was continually revised, on the basis of annual censuses, it has become clear that a direct connection exists between the Tenji court's instruments for overseeing its subjects and those of the *ritsuryō* state.[19] Yoshikawa Shinji has, moreover, demonstrated that Hayakawa's understanding of the means by which imperial orders were promulgated under Tenmu was mistaken, and that, similar to its later namesake, the Office of Major Controllers of Tenmu's era composed a clerical unit within the Council of State.[20]

The foregoing would seem to indicate that, the actual structure of the Ōmi code notwithstanding, the achievements of the Tenji court—particularly those pertaining to organization of the population at large—continued smoothly into Tenmu's reign, and that the provisions of the Kiyomihara code may be viewed as a further refinement of these same Tenji-era innovations. Recently, however, doubts have been raised as to how closely the Kiyomihara codes actually resembled the Taihō regulations.

Enomoto Jun'ichi and Kanegae Hiroyuki contend that the Kiyomihara and earlier codes were derived from Korean, rather than Chinese prototypes. Enomoto points to the difficulties of carrying Tang legal documents back to Japan during the latter half of the seventh century, emphasizing the discontinuation of official envoys to the Tang after 670, and the close negotiations between Japan and the Korean kingdom of Silla.[21] Kanegae notes the adoption of terms like *kohori* (*hyō*), which were in common use in the three Korean kingdoms, and argues that post-Taika

Japan borrowed its provincial administrative structure from Korean models, concluding that the Taihō regulations compiled by Fujiwara Fuhito and his peers were the first to be derived directly from Tang codes.[22]

Ōsumi Kiyoharu, moreover, draws attention to the striking resemblance of the Yōrō codes (thought to be nearly identical in form to their Taihō predecessors) to the reconstructed Tang codes, and to the widely held consensus that Tenmu's *kabane* system for ranking families in accordance with their proximity to the throne was modeled on Silla's *kolp'um* ("bone rank") system.[23] He contends that clause-by-clause examination of Tang legal codes began with the compilation of the Taihō codes, and that the Kiyomihara codes were nothing more than an amalgamation of separate earlier statutes and procedures.[24]

Inasmuch as neither the Ōmi codes nor the Kiyomihara codes survive, even in fragments, there will always be questions about how complete these legal codes really were. Even so, with regard to the systems for managing subjects and taxation, we do know that the practice of dividing the agricultural population into groups of fifty households was in place from very early on, that a hierarchical division of households into classes (*kotō*) and a system of corvée labor and taxes in kind (*chō* and *eki*) was imposed during Tenmu's reign, and that Jitō's reign saw the institution of household registers, revised at six-year intervals. The possibility that these practices might have been somewhat geographically limited in scope notwithstanding, the widespread enactment during this period of systems of land allotment and military organization remains an incontestable fact.[25]

The Tang *ling* regulations begin with provisions concerning households, followed by those concerning universities, selection of personnel, inheritance, official promotion, and remuneration. The Yōrō (and most likely the Taihō) regulations likewise begin with provisions concerning the organization and categorization of households, although these are followed instead by regulations concerning land allotment and corvée labor, a sequence reflecting that found in the Taika Reform edicts, which call for the establishment of laws relating to household registers, records for determining taxes, and land allotment. Clearly it was the systematic administration of these three economic spheres that, above all else, demanded the most attention during the initial establishment of the Japanese *ritsuryō* state.[26]

Establishment of the *ritsuryō* state

As may be understood from the foregoing discussion, the final product of this lengthy evolution of the Japanese *ritsuryō* codes represented an attempt to adopt Chinese legal codes formulated during the Sui and Tang dynasties. The Japanese *ritsuryō* state was founded upon these models.

The impetus behind this project was rooted in a growing sense of tension spreading throughout East Asia. It seems reasonable, therefore, to suppose that in order to achieve this goal, leaders of the emerging *ritsuryō* state worked toward a more effective concentration of national resources, as well as the construction of a military system. And, indeed, the military was developed in tandem with the system for organizing and overseeing Japanese subjects. Regiments (*gundan*) were established throughout the country, their ranks filled with soldiers conscripted from the tax-paying population, one man from each household.[27] All this was done in order to ensure the stability of internal government, as well as to strengthen Japan's military power and enable it to interact with the surrounding kingdoms of East Asia, as an imperium in its own right.[28] Further evidence in support of this view may be found in the abolition of the provincial regiment system shortly after the sense of international tension subsided.

Motivation notwithstanding, it is clear at even a glance that while the Japanese *ritsuryō* codes may have been modeled on Chinese archetypes, they were introduced into a society that was

fundamentally different—in size, social organization, historical experience, economy, and worldview—from that of China. This raises the essential question of how and why, despite these differences, Japan was able to adopt Chinese legal codes at all. This inquiry becomes particularly interesting, in light of the extent to which, and the pace at which, governing institutions and practices in Japan evolved during centuries following the inception of the *ritsuryō* state.

Earlier generations of historians, particularly those publishing in English, were less than generous in their assessments of the *ritsuryō* system, casting it as an overly ambitious, malapropos structure slavishly copied by Japanese aristocrats in awe of the Sui and Tang. Scholars from Asakawa Kanichi, writing in the early 1900s, to Robert Reischauer and George Sansom, working in the 1930s, to John W. Hall, writing in the 1960s, viewed the reforms of the sixth and seventh centuries as an attempt to transplant to Japan what "was very near to a faithful copy of the T'ang system," although they did also call attention to important points of difference between the Japanese and Chinese systems—most notably the Japanese addition of a Council of Shrines (*jingikan*) in parallel or superior to the Council of State (*daijōkan*) and a fusion of Japanese theories of sovereignty into an otherwise Chinese structure.[29]

In more recent decades, however, historians analyzing *ritsuryō* institutions have emphasized the points of departure that distinguished the Japanese polity from those of China, and maintained that the Taihō and Yōrō *ritsuryō* represented careful *adaptations*, rather than simple *adoptions*, of Chinese practices. Richard Miller's posthumously published *Japan's First Bureaucracy*, for example, completely rejected the notion of the *ritsuryō* system as a naïve attempt to force square Chinese pegs into round Japanese holes. Indeed, in Miller's view, the Chinese legal and administrative apparatus introduced in the seventh century amounted to little more than a façade that cloaked time-honored Japanese modes of thinking and ways of functioning, and "did not fundamentally alter … traditional social and political dynamics."[30]

Two decades earlier, James Crump, Jr. had offered a less radical assessment of the degree to which Japanese *ritsuryō* codes departed from their Tang models, and discussed the key reasons for the modifications. In addition to the influence of traditional institutions and entrenched interests, and to Japanese aspirations toward improving on less successful elements of the Tang codes, Crump cited the influence of Korean modifications of Chinese institutions, and infatuation with earlier Chinese titles and practices.[31]

Yoshida Takashi has pointed out three features of the Tang legal codes that facilitated adaptation to Japanese realities and priorities: First, the codes were promulgated alongside principles of propriety (*li*) circumscribed by traditional (Chinese) notions of etiquette and ceremony. Second, codes derived mainly from imperial regulations. And third, these codes did not contain any regulations that directly defined or limited royal prerogatives.[32] Hori Toshikazu has further suggested that these Chinese codes were readily accepted into Japanese society by virtue of containing prominent elements of aristocratic culture inherited from the Wei, Jin, and Nanbei Dynasties (184–589).[33]

Elaborating on the concept of aristocratic elements within the Japanese *ritsuryō* state, Seki Akira and Ōtsu Tōru stress the prominent role of powerful regional families based in the Kinai region near the capital in the new regime, contending that the centralized government established after the Taika Reforms amounted to nationwide domination by these highly influential Kinai families.[34] And, indeed, when one considers that provincial governorships—which were of key importance to the functioning of regional government—were awarded exclusively to members of Kinai aristocratic families, and that collection of taxes from areas outside the capital region retained strong overtones of ritual submission to pre-Taika provincial patriarchs (*kuni no miyatsuko*), it does seem plausible to view the Japanese *ritsuryō* state as a continuation of the earlier Yamato polity, reordered into bureaucratic form by powerful Kinai families.

Similarly, Inoue Mitsusada asserted that although the Japanese *ritsuryō* state may appear, at first glance, to have adopted the same form of governance as the Sui and Tang, the Japanese and Chinese systems were erected over significantly different support structures. The latter, he maintained, involved direct rule through a bureaucracy comprising the emperor and his liegemen; while the former ought rather to be understood as a dualistic structure fusing the *ritsuryō* system into the older system of hereditary clan rule.[35]

This argument was subsequently developed by Ishimoda Shō into a theory expounding the dualistic nature of relationships governing production. Adopting the concept of an "Asian community," in which the communal nature of a group is embodied not by an assemblage of commoners but by the head or chief of that community, along with the idea that relations of production in such a community amount to enslavement of the subject population as a whole by the state, Ishimoda argued that, with regard to the means and bonds of production, the relationship between the state and its subjects was secondary to the one that existed between local chieftains on the land—exemplified by district magistrates (*gunji*)—and the people they governed.[36]

The emperor and the aristocracy

Historians have also explored the relationship between the emperor and the aristocracy under the *ritsuryō* state. In contrast to efforts to portray the Japanese *ritsuryō* monarch as an archetypical oriental despot, Seki Akira identifies the court nobility as a relatively independent political force, citing the yin rank (*on'i*) system, under which the sons of officials holding the fifth court rank or higher began their careers at intermediate (rather than beginning) levels in the hierarchy, and the tendency for aristocrats of the third rank and higher to come from the same powerful noble houses that had produced the royal counselors (*taifu* or *maetsukimi*) of the pre-Taika polity.[37]

Ishio Yoshihisa observed that, unlike the chancellors (*zaixiang*) of the Chinese court, the members of the Japanese Council of State (*daijōkan*) formed a legally-defined deliberative body that issued directives independently of the emperor, while Ishimoda Shō noted that the Japanese *ritsuryō* statutes on documentary forms (*kushiki-ryō*) described day-to-day directives that the Tang legal codes classified as royal pronouncements, under the articles detailing petitions issued by the Council of State.[38] Similarly, Hayakawa Shōhachi pointed out that such petitions included requests for conferral of the fifth rank and higher, and maintained that although the Japanese emperor should still be viewed as an autocratic monarch, his power was more significantly circumscribed by the aristocracy than was that of the Tang emperors.[39]

On the other hand, Morita Tei contends that the articles discussing Council of State petitions were nothing more than illustrative examples, Sakaue Yasutoshi has argued that the clauses on conferral of fifth rank and higher were merely the product of careless copying of Tang statutes, and Torao Tatsuya asserts that the Japanese ministerial (*sangi*) system was premised on the Tang chancellery.[40]

Ultimately, the degree to which members of the aristocracy were able to reject their emperor's commands, and the degree to which emperors were bound to entertain the demands of the aristocracy, are impossible to ascertain from the content of *ritsuryō* regulations alone; they must be investigated through actual examples of interaction between emperors and the nobility.[41] One can, for instance, examine the case of Emperor Shōmu's (701–756, r. 724–749) attempt to confer the title of Grand Consort (*daibunin*) on his mother Fujiwara Miyako (?–754). His efforts met opposition from Prince Nagaya (684?–729), and resulted in a compromise whereby Miyako received instead the lesser title of Dowager Empress (*kōtai bunin*).[42] One might also debate the significance of the fact that the majority of the noble houses that

maintained their power and influence from the pre-Taika era lost both over the course of the early *ritsuryō* era.[43]

Development of the *ritsuryō* state

In terms of written law, the promulgation of the Taihō codes in 701 cleanly delineates the beginning of the *ritsuryō* state. In practical terms, however, there is considerable room for debate as to exactly when something that can be appropriately described as "the *ritsuryō* state" actually began—or ended. The process of establishing provincial government offices, for instance, was not completed countrywide until the Tenpyō era (729–749).[44]

Research discoveries and scholarly opinions on state control of lands raise even more complex questions. The famous "Ordinance on Permanent Private Possession of Reclaimed Fields" (*konden einen shizaihō*), promulgated in 743, for example, has traditionally been hailed as a dramatic departure from the spirit of the *ritsuryō* system, and a key step marking the end of the imperial state in its original form. Indeed, the English-language literature on the subject universally casts it as such.[45] Some historians, however, see this ordinance as having *deepened ritsuryō*-style management of land, by virtue of facilitating the state's grasp of large-scale land reclamation.[46] Moreover, while the law was enacted four decades after the promulgation of the Taihō codes, it was an adaptation of a much earlier Tang regulation concerning ownership of lands by government officials. And, the Taihō statutory provisions of private landholding notwithstanding, wooden tablets unearthed from the site of the residence of an early eighth-century imperial prince (Prince Nagaya, 684–729) clearly attest to inheritable private possession of lands among the court nobility.[47]

During the Heian period, three collections of supplementary laws (*kyakushiki*) were compiled, and procedural manuals for court ceremonies closely following Tang models assembled. These developments lead some historians to argue that the ninth century, when the *ritsuryō* system was expanded and enhanced in this manner, was actually the period during which government in Japan most closely resembled that of China.[48] Nevertheless, caution is warranted with regard to how much one reads into the adoption of Chinese ceremonial procedures of this sort. Among other considerations here is the fact that only parts of the Tang manuals were adopted: the Chinese texts included protocols pertaining to broader social customs of the ruling class, such as weddings and coming of age ceremonies, whereas the Japanese versions were limited to rules for proper behavior while in attendance at court.

The end of the *ritsuryō* state

By the tenth century, many of the institutions and practices we have cited as signal components of the *ritsuryō* system had been amended, abolished, or allowed to wither. The careful maintenance of household registers disintegrated during the ninth and tenth centuries, and the land redistribution system was abandoned after 902. The provincial regiments that formed the core of the *ritsuryō* military apparatus were eliminated in all but the frontier regions in 792. In the center, government offices were streamlined, the system governing advancement through the ranks was recast, and the entire bureaucracy underwent large-scale reform. In the provinces, the power and fortunes of district magistrates and other traditional elites declined, and provincial governors, now styled "*zuryō*" ("custodians of the domain"), utilized private retainers, who followed them from appointment to appointment, to collect revenues directly from taxpayers.

Until a generation ago, there was nearly universal agreement among historians that such changes collectively signaled the end of the *ritsuryō* state. Parsing the classical era though a model

that emphasized a dichotomy between "native" and "foreign" ideals, scholars focused their attention on the demise—often characterized as the collapse—of key *ritsuryō* institutions and practices, to spin narratives that described the resurgence of the former as both cause and consequence of the failure of the latter.

In the English-language literature on the subject, this approach is epitomized in Kozo Yamamura's revealingly titled article, "The Decline of the Ritsuryo System," which appeared in the premier issue of the *Journal of Japanese Studies*, in 1974. Yamamura, an economic historian, largely equated "the *ritsuryō* system" with its provisions for state ownership of agricultural lands, which he characterized as "inherently unstable and bound to collapse."[49] Created to enhance the power and reach of the throne, the system eroded and crumbled when it could no longer keep pace with the needs of a growing cultivator population for expansion of the agricultural base, and the opportunities this situation afforded court nobles and provincial elites to enlarge their sources of income—and, ultimately, of control over people—outside the *ritsuryō* economic structure.

In recent decades, there has been a marked shift of focus away from the decline of early institutions toward the beginnings of new ones. In the 1970s, Sakamoto Shōzō pointed to the rise of the *zuryō*, the reorganization of taxable lands into new units known as *myō*, and the emergence of tax-exempt proprietary rights over land in the early tenth century, and argued that these developments signaled the advent of a new *ōchō* ("royal court") polity. He further argued that restructuring of the village and district system and of the tax rates on public lands that occurred in the second quarter of the eleventh century—in response to the proliferation of land reclamation and local resistance to the authority of provincial officials—marked the beginning of a second, mature stage of this *ōchō* state.[50]

While no historian to date has disputed the assessment that, by the tenth century, governance in Japan had become something substantially different from the *ritsuryō* polity of the early eighth century—a changed order of things that ought to be recognized as a distinct polity—most publications since the 1970s have emphasized gradual adjustment, enduring continuities, and changing needs and circumstances, rather than failure and sharp breaks with the past. Thus Ōtsu Tōru, citing the persistence of rule grounded in central authority, has suggested that the political and socio-economic order from the late eighth to the early tenth century is best characterized as a second phase of the classical polity, a "late *ritsuryō* state" (*kōki ritsuryō kokka*). On the other hand, Yoshikawa Shinji, focusing on hierarchical relationships among emperors, regents, provincial governors, and other members of the ruling elite, would rather have us view this era as one of "nascency of the power bloc polity" (*shōki kenmon taisei*) that spanned the interval between the end of the *ritsuryō* state and the consolidation of the early medieval *kenmon taisei* polity.[51]

Scholarship in English has largely followed this trend. The early work of G. Cameron Hurst and Cornelius Kiley, for example, called attention to the persistence of the *ritsuryō* structure, even as operations of governance within its framework were assuming forms radically different from those of the Nara period, and to the durability of relationships among elites and fundamental tenets of power-sharing throughout the classical epoch.[52] A decade later, Dana Morris, William Wayne Farris, and Bruce Batten argued that enduring priorities and goals on the part of the court shaped ongoing development of institutions and practices for revenue extraction and provincial governance across the span of the eighth to twelfth centuries; while Farris and Karl Friday emphasized the tenacity of core ideals, principles, and even principals, within the evolution of the military system from the pre-Taika era through the early medieval period.[53] More recently, the fifteen Japanese, European, and American contributors to a volume that grew out of a series of conferences at Harvard University in the early years of the new millennium collectively contend that, far from devolving from its *ritsuryō* roots into a kind of proto-feudalism that

presaged the medieval world (as had once been supposed) the polity actually become *more* centralized than ever before during the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries.[54]

Evaluating the *ritsuryō* state

Following this brief survey of the trajectory of research on the *ritsuryō* state, we need to ask what significance the nature of that policy had for the history of the Japanese archipelago. Archeological excavation of the sites of the imperial palaces at Naniwa, Heijō (Nara), and Kyoto; the Daizaifu; the Taga Stockade; and provincial and district government compounds across the country has advanced steadily, yielding a huge volume of official records on wooden tablets (*mokkan*). Analysis of these, in combination with study of the Shōsōin document collection, which consist of documents discarded by the Tōdaiji Construction Office (*zōtōdaiji-shi*) and the Sutra Scriptorium (*shakyōsho*), has clarified the role played by written documents in the administration of the *ritsuryō* state. Excavations of the remains of ancient highways and the checkerboard-like field divisions known as *jōri* have also progressed. The information thus obtained makes it impossible to sustain the once-popular notion that the *ritsuryō* system extended no further than the surface of classical Japanese society. At the same time, it is equally clear that the pre-Taika logic of ritual submission by local notables to the Yamato king deeply colored the *ritsuryō* polity as well. In this regard, it is only a mild exaggeration to characterize the Japanese *ritsuryō* state—at least in terms of relations of power and status—as a reexpression of the Yamato polity in the vocabulary of Tang Chinese administrative law, which was based on the principle of state control over individuals.

In contrast to the absolute authority of the Chinese emperor, underlain by the Mandate of Heaven, the Japanese sovereign's legitimacy derived from his religious guarantee of agricultural production effected through anticipatory celebrations and harvest rituals. By the seventh century at the latest, the king was accepted by local magnates of the Kinai region (the political center of the country) as a special charismatic figure who bestowed surnames and titles upon them.[55] For a time, the importation of the Sui-Tang *ritsuryō* system put the Japanese sovereign at the head of an imperium resembling that of his Chinese counterpart; but during the long medieval epoch of warrior rule that followed the collapse of the classical polity, the only powers that remained in imperial hands were the putative authority to award ranks and posts (which had by then become mere indicators of status), and the authority to sponsor agricultural and other rites and Buddhist ceremonies. And yet, it must be said that above and beyond the level of particular institutions, the introduction of the *ritsuryō* polity left a profound impression on the history of the Japanese archipelago.

First and foremost in this regard, one can cite the posting throughout the country of officials possessing literary and mathematical skills to buttress the structure of rule—a role they and their successors continued to play over the long term in Japanese history. The existence of these individuals versed in *ritsuryō*-like adminsitrative procedures is proof that while styles of documentation evolved, and tax collection gave way to the *shōen* system, the ability to write and to calculate remained the essential tools of administration.

Second, the multilayered hierarchical division of regions and jurisdictions, and the country-wide standardization of place names established by the *ritsuryō* system was, essentially, followed throughout the premodern era. This includes the territorial notion of "Japan" itself.

And third, the *ritsuryō* system provided a system of succinct, strictly defined legal terminology that could not possibly have emerged from the hitherto-used Yamato vocabulary. This effectively became the womb of all subsequent legal structure, respected in medieval times by not just the court but by the successive warrior regimes as well. In the broadest of terms, the *ritsuryō* polity can be thought of as having brought civilization to Japanese society.[56]

Notes

1 It was once presumed that the adoption of *ritsuryō* codes was an element shared in common by all East Asian states, and consequently served, along with the Chinese writing system, Confucianism, and Buddhism, to differentiate this cultural sphere from the rest of the world (see, for example, Nishijima Sadao, "Higashi Ajia sekai no keisei to tenkai"), 67. Recent research, however, convincingly argues that the kingdoms of the Korean peninsula did not compile systematic legal codes. See Kitamura Hideto, "Chōsen ni okeru 'ritsuryōsei' no henshitsu," 181–186.

2 Niida Noboru, *Tōrei shūi*; Niida Noboru and Ikeda On, *Tōrei shūiho*. This latter work includes attempts at reconstructing portions of the *ryō* regulations of the Japanese Taihō legal code of 701. An English translation and commentary on the Tang appears in Wallace Johnson, *The T'ang Code*.

3 Dai Jianguo, "Tianyige cang mingchaoben 'guanpinling' kao," 46–70. Tianyige bowuguan, Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan lishi yanjiusuo tianshengling zhengli ketizu, *Tianyige cang mingchaoben tianshengling jiaozheng fu tangling fuyuan yanjiu*.

4 While the term, "Seventeen-Article Constitution" has become the standard appellation for this famous document (introduced, according to *Nihon shoki*, by Shōtoku Taishi in 604), the name is somewhat misleading. The document is, in the words of Asakawa Kan'ichi,

> no constitution or law in the modern sense, for it defines no State institution, contains no positive legislation, and has no word of punishment or enforcement. It is rather a set of maxims written … as a guide to … daily conduct in official life.

It was, nevertheless, a significant step toward the formation of the *ritsuryō* system, in that, "the moral maxims are either Buddhistic or Chinese in principle, while all the others are altogether Chinese." Asakawa Kan'ichi, *The Early Institutional Life of Japan*, 253–254.

5 These districts were initially called *hyō*, and were later renamed *gun* under the Taihō code, promulgated in 701.

6 Key studies of the emergence and adoption of the *ritsuryō* system in English include Asakawa, *The Early Institutional Life of Japan*; John W. Hall, *Government and Local Power in Japan*; Richard J. Miller, *Japan's First Bureaucracy*; Inoue Mitsusada, "The Ritsuryō System in Japan"; and Bruce Batten, "Foreign Threat and Domestic Reform" and "State and Frontier in Early Japan."

7 The Battle of Paekchon River, which took place of the western coast of Korea, and its effect on Japanese political developments, are discussed in detail in Batten, "Foreign Threat and Domestic Reform."

8 The history of law in early China is discussed in Shiga Shūzō, "Hōten hensan no rekishi." A concise account in English of the influence of Chinese culture on early state formation and the initial compilation of Japanese legal codes appears in Marian Ury, "Chinese Learning and Intellectual Life."

9 The standard text and commentary for modern research on the content of Japanese *ritsuryō* codes, is *Ritsuryō*, volume 3 of *Nihon shisō taikei*, edited by Inoue Mitsusada.

10 Nakada Kaoru, "Yōrōryō no shikōki ni tsuite," "Tō-ryō to Nihon-ryō to no hikaku kenkyū," and "Yōrō koryō ōbunjō no kenkyū"; Takikawa Seijirō, *Ritsuryō no kenkyū*.

11 Sakamoto Tarō, *Taika kaishin no kenkyū*.

12 Inoue Mitsusada, "Gunji seido no seiritsu nendai ni tsuite."

13 Kishi Toshio, "Zōseki to taika kaishin no mikotonori," 86–104.

14 Kamada Motokazu, "Hyō no seiritsu to kokuzō," 165. We also now know that the Naniwa Palace, constructed in 652, during Emperor Kōtoku's reign, possessed a spacious main office or reception compound (*chōdōin*) wherein courtiers gathered to discuss political matters and conduct important ceremonies. The floorplan of this compound most probably formed the model for later palaces, beginning with the Fujiwara Palace, erected in 710. See Yoshikawa Shinji, "Naniwa nagara toyosaki no miya no rekishiteki ichi," 89–90. Textual critique of the Taika reform edicts also focused on the development of the units under which various population groups were organized. Key studies here include Hirano Kunio, "Taika kaishin to Tenmu chō," 446–451, and Kamada Motokazu, "7 seiki no Nihon rettō," 35–41.

15 Aoki Kazuo, "Kiyomihara ryō to kodai kanryōsei."

16 Hayakawa Shōhachi, "Ritsuryō dajōkansei no seiritsu."

17 Inoue Mitsusada, "Nihon ritsuryō no seiritsu to sono chūshakusho," 96; Kishi Toshio, "Zōseki to taika kaushin no mikotonori," 107–109. For an English-language introduction to *mokkan*, see Joan Piggott, "Mokkan: Wooden Documents from the Nara Period."

18 Ichi Hiroki, "Asuka Fujiwara shutsodo no hyōseika nifuda mokkan," 365–378.

19 Yoshikawa Shinji, "Ritsuryō taisei no keisei," 213; Sakaue Yasutoshi, "Shimahyō kokō hendō kiroku mokkan wo meguru shomondai," 164–181.
20 Yoshikawa Shinji, "Ritsuryō daijōkansei to gōgisei," first published in 1988, as well as his "Chokufuron."
21 Enomoto Jun'ichi, "Japan's Ritsuryō System in the 'East Asian World'," 2–17.
22 Kanegae Hiroyuki, "Fujiwarakyō zōeiki no Nihon ni okeru gairai chishiki no sesshu to naisei hōshin," 70–81.
23 Yi Sŏngshi, "Shiragi Bunbu, Shinbun'ō jidai no shūken seisaku to koppinsei." Discussions of the bone rank system and the relationship between early Japan and early Korea in English appear in Richard J. Miller, *Ancient Japanese Nobility: The Kabane Ranking System*; William Wayne Farris, *Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures*; Yi Ki-dong, "Silla's Kolp'um System and Japan's Kabane System"; C.S. Kim, "The Kolp'um System"; Hong Wontack, *Paekche of Korea and the Origin of Yamato Japan* and *Ancient Korea–Japan Relations: Paekche and the Origin of the Yamato Dynasty*.
24 Ōsumi Kiyoharu, "Taihō ritsuryō no rekishiteki isō," 231.
25 Sakaue Yasutoshi, "Ritsuryōsei no seiritsu," 13–25.
26 See especially Ikeda On's remarks in Aoki Kazuo et al., *Shinpojiumu Nihon rekishi ritsuryō kokkaron*, 101; Yoshida Takashi, "'Ritsuryō kokka' to 'kōchi kōmin,'" 37–39.
27 Yoshida Takashi, "Henkosei, handensei no kōzōteki tokushitsu," 202; Urata (Yoshie) Akiko, "Henkosei no igi," 52. Comprehensive descriptions of the *ritsuryō* military system and its evolution appear in Karl Friday, *Hired Swords: The Rise of Private Warrior Power in Early Japan*; and William Wayne Farris, *Heavenly Warriors: The Evolution of Japan's Military, 500–1300*.
28 Yoshinaga Masafumi, "Ritsuryō gundansei no seiritsu to kōzō," 55; Shimomukai Tatsuhiko, "Nihon ritsuryō gunsei no kihon kōzō," 37.
29 Asakawa, *The Early Institutional Life of Japan*; George Sansom, "Early Japanese Law and Administration"; Robert Karl Reischauer, *Early Japanese History*; John Whitney Hall, *Government and Local Power in Japan, 500–1700*. The quoted phrase is from Sansom, *A History of Japan to 1334*, 69.
30 Richard J. Miller, *Japan's First Bureaucracy: A Study of Eighth-Century Government*, 6.
31 James Crump, Jr., "'Borrowed' T'ang Titles and Officers in the Yōrō Code," 40. See also his "T'ang Penal Law in Early Japan."
32 Yoshida Takashi, "'Ritsuryō kokka' to 'kōchi kōmin,'" 31.
33 Hori Toshikazu, "Chūgoku ni okeru ritsuryōsei no tenkai," 73. Similarly, Robert Borgen reminds us that the meritocratic principles that dominated Chinese government by the time of the Song dynasty (960–1279) represented no less a departure from the early Tang polity than subsequent Japanese developments did. The crucial difference was that Japanese and Chinese governance evolved in opposite directions, the latter becoming more bureaucratic, and the former more hereditary. This evolutionary divergence, he warns, has often anachronistically colored historians' perceptions of Japanese "failures" in adopting Chinese institutions of government. See *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*, 79.
34 Seki Akira, "Ritsuryō shihaisō no seiritsu to sono kōzō," 177; Ōtsu Tōru, "Ritsuryō kokka to kinai," 3–74.
35 Inoue Mitsusada, "Nihon no ritsuryō taisei," 150. This study was first published in 1971.
36 Ishimoda Shō, *Nihon no kodai kokka*, 325–327. Ishimoda's views have been sharply criticized by Yoshida Akira and Ōmachi Ken, who assert that it was not the district magistrates but the village heads below them who were in charge of managing relations of production. See Yoshida Akira, "Shuchōsei ron," 119–120, and *Nihon kodai sonrakushi jōsetsu*, 53–79, 280–285; Ōmachi Ken, "Ritsuryō-seiteki gunjisei no tokushitsu to tenkai," 143–196, and "Ritsuryō kokka to sonraku shuchōsei," 85–106.
37 Abe Takehiko, "Kodai zokuchō keishō no mondai ni tsuite," 97–98; Seki Akira, "Taika zengo no tennō kenryoku ni tsuite," 70–71, and "Ritsuryō kizokuron," 380–382. Descriptions and analyses of the court rank system and the yin rank provisions appear in Joan Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*, 179–184; William and Helen McCullough, "Some Notes on Rank and Office."; or James Crump, Jr., "'Borrowed' T'ang Titles and Offices." For an example of the Japanese emperor cast as oriental despot, see Takahashi Tomio, "Ritsuryō tennōsei no kōzō to sono seiritsu."
38 Ishio Yoshihisa, *Nihon kodai no tennōsei to daijōkan seido*, 197; Ishimoda Shō, *Nihon no kodai kokka*, 195. Ishio characterized the Japanese imperial system as a kind of hereditary charismatic monarchy, and the *ritsuryō* bureaucracy as an officialdom of family status and property. This concept of charismatic monarchy is explicated in Max Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building*.

39 Hayakawa Shōhachi, "Ritsuryō sei to tennō," 3–8.
40 Morita Tei, "Daijōkansei to sesshō kanpaku," 36–38; Sakaue Yasutoshi, "Hatsunicchoku, sōshō jikō to ronsō jikō," 10–11; Torao Tatsuya, "Sangisei no seiritsu," 88.
41 Iida Mizuho, "Daijōkansō ni tsuite," 26.
42 Torao Tatsuya, "Fujiwara no Miyako ni 'dai fujin' shōgō jiken ni tsuite."
43 Nagayama Yasutaka, "Kodai kizoku no shūen," 117–120.
44 Yamanaka Toshiji, *Kodai chihō kanga iseki no kenkyū*, 388–389.
45 See, for example, John W. Hall, *Government and Local Power*, 99–114; William Wayne Farris, *Population, Disease and Land in Early Japan, 645–900*, 74–99; Torao Toshiya, "Nara Economic and Social Institutions"; Dana Morris, "Land and Society"; and Cornelius J. Kiley, "Provincial Administration and Land Tenure in Early Heian." Sakaue Yasutoshi, "Ritsuryō kokka no hō to shakai," 20–27, also argues, based on analysis of the Tiansheng *ling*, that the provisions for private ownership of land seriously shook the foundations of the previous system of state-owned land.
46 See, for example, Yoshida Takashi, "Konden einen shizaihō no kisoteki kenkyū," 279.
47 Terasaki Yasuhiro, *Nagayaō*, 178–201.
48 See, for example, Ōtsu Tōru, "Kyakushiki no seiritsu to sekkanki no hō," 83, 99–100.
49 Yamamura, Kozo, "The Decline of the Ritsuryō System: Hypotheses on Economic and Institutional Change." The quoted phrases, which appear frequently throughout the article, are from p. 28.
50 Sakamoto Shozō, *Nihon ōchō kokka taiseiron*; Sakaue Yasutoshi, "Fumyō taisei no seiritsu," 25. The *ōchō* polity is discussed in Chapter 8 of this volume. For more on the vicissitudes of governance and landholding in the provinces during the tenth and eleventh centuries, see Chapter 9.
51 Ōtsu Tōru, "Ritsuryō kokka no tenkai katei"; Yoshikawa Shinji, "Sekkan seiji no tensei." For a full discussion of *kenmon taisei*, see Chapter 7 of this volume.
52 G. Cameron Hurst, III, *Insei: Abdicated Sovereigns in the Politics of Late Heian Japan 1086–1185*; Cornelius J. Kiley, "Estate and Property in the Late Heian Period."
53 Dana Morris, "Peasant Economy in Early Japan, 650–950"; Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land*; Bruce Batten, "Provincial Administration in Early Japan: From *Ritsuryō kokka* to *Ōchō kokka*"; Farris, *Heavenly Warriors*; Friday, *Hired Swords*.
54 Mikael Adolphson et al., *Heian Japan: Centers and Peripheries*.
55 Ōtsu Tōru, "Kōnō to saishi," and "Kura to kagi"; Sakaue Yasutoshi, "Kodai no hō to kanshū," 213–217; Yoshida Takashi, " 'Ritsuryō kokka' to 'kōchi kōmin,' " 35.
56 Yoshida Takashi, "Ritsuryō kokka no shodankai," 438.

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7
From classical to medieval?
Ōchō kokka, *kenmon taisei*, and the Heian court

Mikael S. Adolphson

Japan's Heian age (794–1185) witnessed unprecedented production in the cultural sphere, resulting in such famous literary works as the *Genji monogatari*, religious constructions such as the Byōdōin in Uji, as well as the impressive monastic complexes of Enryakuji, Onjōji, Tōji, and Kōyasan. But these accomplishments occurred in the context of a socio-political environment that changed considerably from the emperor-centered state that was envisioned in the Nara period. In short, the emperor, who had during the move from Nara in 784 and the following half-century maintained direct control of the imperial court, came to share much of that power, if not most of it, with high-ranking nobles. Furthermore, the late Heian period saw military aristocrats and their followers become influential in the capital, ushering in first a diarchy between the Heian court and the Kamakura shogunate (1185–1333) and then a rule dominated by warriors in the Ashikaga age (1336–1573). The challenge for historians, then, has been to reconcile the cultural accomplishments of the Heian and Kamakura periods with these changes in the socio-political structures, while not succumbing to the creation of a simplistic narrative that overemphasizes one group over another.

In describing the changes that occurred during this period, Japanese scholars have used a range of theories and approaches, although early postwar scholarship was especially committed to a Marxist framework, seeing the various historical stages as having been characterized by tensions among classes. In the past couple of decades, a broader range of approaches have been applied. Even so, the concepts put in place by earlier scholars still serve as the framework through which many present-day scholars continue to approach the Heian and Kamakura eras. One might argue that the influence of Marxist theories in the field of history turned a generation of Japanese researchers away from larger theoretical questions and induced a focus on narrower questions and problems. Nevertheless, theoretical discussions about the nature of political, social, and economic structures in place during the Heian era continue to engage Japanese scholars, and as such are important cornerstones for research on the age.

The regency and the royal-court state

Moving the capital from Nara, first to Nagaoka in 784, and then eventually to Kyoto (Heian-kyō) in 794, was accomplished through powerful rule by Emperor Kanmu (737–806, ruled

781–806) with support from leading members of the Northern Fujiwara. Even though Kanmu's son, Heizei (774–824, r. 806–809), who had retired earlier because of health issues, rebelled against his younger brother Saga (786–842, r. 809–823) in 810 in the so-called Kusuko Incident, the imperial family maintained strong control over the court and state matters for another half a century by relying on the legal codes adopted from China.[1] Historians generally refer to this "statutory regime" of the Nara and the early Heian age as the *ritsuryō* (penal and administrative code) state, to reflect a strong reliance on the law codes and the formal bureaucratic structure.[2] Subsequent centuries, however, saw substantial changes in the political structures, even as the general framework centered on the imperial court remained. Scholars have identified two major transitions, one in the second half of the ninth century and one in the tenth. Though these changes can be seen as connected to the same overall trend of increased reliance on private connections and assets, putting primacy on one over the other has serious implications for how we view the developments of the early Heian age. A closer examination of each of these transitions is thus warranted.

Following the move of the capital, the most momentous event in the ninth century occurred in 858, when a young emperor (Seiwa, 850–880, r. 858–876) of only eight was put on the throne, ushering in an age of rule through regents. His grandfather, Fujiwara no Yoshifusa (804–872), assumed the title of *sesshō* (regent), thus becoming the first person not hailing from the imperial family to do so. Yoshifusa's adopted son, Mototsune (836–891), continued to dominate the imperial succession to ensure his influence as regent, though he later ran into problems with Emperor Uda (867–931, r. 887–897), who ascended the throne as an adult in 887. Mototsune solved this problem after a brief power struggle known as the *Akō no fungi* (the Akō Controversy) by assuming a new title: *kanpaku*, or regent for an adult emperor. For the next two centuries, the imperial court was dominated by a series of Fujiwara chieftains, which has given rise to the notion of a regency age (*sekkanke jidai*).[3]

The socio-political context that made the regency possible can only be properly understood when examined from the very pinnacle of the imperial state: the throne itself and the succession to it. In medieval Europe, it was common practice that the first-born son inherit the throne, although there were both exceptions and challenges to that principle.[4] In Japan, such a principle was absent, meaning that the oldest son was not necessarily the preferred candidate for the throne. This arrangement was created because of a strong desire to produce able, male heirs. Up until the mid-eighth century, women had in fact been active both as co-rulers with their spouses and as monarchs in their own right, but they were in practice, if not in principle, excluded from the throne after the death in 770 of Empress Shōtoku (718–770, r. 749–758; later as Kōken, r. 764–770), who had battled against the Fujiwara and asserted her own power with the help of a skillful monk named Dōkyō (700?–772).[5]

With daughters no longer seen as viable candidates for the throne after the late eighth century, sovereigns maintained several consorts to increase the likelihood of having at least one son. The problem with such an arrangement, if it was tied to primogeniture, was that an insignificant consort might be the first to have a son, who in turn would lack support to rule. Or, the first-born son might simply be frail and thus unlikely to be a force at court, and might not be able to produce any offspring, which would have jeopardized the imperial line itself. In contrast, by allowing numerous candidates to the throne, the continuation of the imperial line could be secured, but by the same token, there was a great chance that there would also be competition among several eligible candidates. In that context, the candidate with the strongest support in the capital had a distinct advantage, as the social status and political backing of the imperial consort trumped birthright based on age.

In essence, then, the imperial succession could very well be up in the air until late in any given emperor's life, depending on who had produced sons among his consorts. Nevertheless, if the

daughter of the Northern Fujiwara chieftain had a son with the sovereign, chances were high that that child would become the crown prince. It must also be noted that imperial consorts would normally return to the residence of their parents for childbirth. As a result, a child would be raised, not in the emperor's household, but more commonly in the household of the woman.[6] The importance of this arrangement must not be underestimated. Imperial children, including crown princes, were accordingly brought up in the house of their maternal grandfather, who could exert considerable influence over future sovereigns through childhood education.

Regental offices were undoubtedly crucial in establishing Fujiwara control at court, though they were not always essential to it. The Fujiwara chieftain par excellence, Michinaga (966–1027), for example, served as regent for only for a short while, using instead the title of *nairan* (internal examiner of documents) for most of his career. In other words, the Fujiwara dominance, though exerted through their female relatives as mothers of emperors, relied less on specific titles than on direct, private connections and influence over the emperor.[7] Nevertheless, scholars frequently see enough of a change with the appointment of Fujiwara regents and their continued influence that they refer to the period from 858 to 1068 as the era of the Fujiwara regency.[8]

Such a periodization rests on the notion that the regency represents a fundamental change from the preceding court structures, but as even a casual examination of court political operations shows, other than a shift in favor of the Fujiwara at the expense of the emperor within the court, one would be hard pressed to find any other significant changes.[9] In other words, the weakness in the *sekkanke jidai* approach is its exclusive focus on the Fujiwara regents, which tends to result in other changes being overlooked. In fact, some scholars have pointed to the tenth century as a more dramatic time of transition away from the statutory state structures, leading to substantial political and social changes. This broader view is best represented by the *ōchō kokka* theory.

One of the first Japanese scholars to argue that the tenth century was one of transition away from the *ritsuryō* (legal and penal codes) state was Ishimoda Shō (1912–1986).[10] As also argued by Sakamoto Shōzō (b. 1926), one of the most substantial changes came in the administration of the provinces and the collection of taxes. For example, whereas taxes had been tied to specific families that had been assigned paddies in the *ritsuryō* system, beginning in the early tenth century, taxes were assigned to units called *myō* assigned to a local cultivator, who was responsible for delivering taxes based on the unit rather than the family. In addition, while the imperial court continued to appoint governors, the latter were given a free hand in the collection of taxes as long as a specific amount was delivered to the capital. In many cases, these governors were either relatives or close allies of the Fujiwara or other powerful families at court. Thus, the imperial court basically ceased its direct administration of the provinces to secure a steady flow of taxes by governors who could do as they pleased in the appointed areas.[11]

Hashimoto Yoshihiko (b. 1924) provided a closer analysis of the court structures in which he maintained that the rule of nobles added three new characteristics to the *ritsuryō* state: the establishment of the regent titles, the establishment of rituals and precedents, and the collaboration of the noble houses. In addition, much of the political action was transferred to the "meeting of the high council" (*jin no sadame*), where ranking nobles and advisers met to make expedient decisions.[12] In Hashimoto's view, the *jin no sadame* spurred the emergence of the council and meetings of the retired emperor's headquarters (*in-no-chō*), which led in turn to the early medieval rule of *kōke seiken* ("aristocratic regime").[13] Hashimoto received some critique for not recognizing the central role that the emperor continued to play, and for failing to sufficiently emphasize those changes that did in fact occur in governmental procedures.

In the end, it is land management and the changes in tax collection procedures that received most attention in discussions about the tenth century transition and the royal-court state. For

example, many scholars argued that it was the tax-farming approach that allowed governors the opportunity to enrich themselves during their stints, often resulting in attempts to squeeze out more than had been the custom. In fact, a consequence of this new hands-off approach on the part of the imperial court and resulting tendency toward abuse by governors was the emergence of complaints from farmers, as evidenced in the famous petition from Owari Province in 988, which resulted in the governor eventually being deposed for having imposed unprecedented taxes and dues on the local village leaders.[14] This privatization affected vast tracts of land in even more dramatic ways than those that stayed under the jurisdiction of provincial governors. I am, of course, referring here to the creation of private estates (*shōen*), which gained prominence in earnest from the tenth century.

Although patterns for the creation of *shōen* varied widely—some created as rewards to temples and nobles, others from below as local land managers "donated" a piece of land to escape the taxation of provincial governors—they were all part of the aforementioned trend of privatizing the administration of land. The key to the success and the spread of *shōen* was the division of rights to different "offices" (*shiki*), each corresponding to a certain level of income from the estate. This division effectively created strong interests in land from the level of land administrators all the way up to patrons in the capital area. Regardless, *shōen* have traditionally been understood to signal the dismantling of the old system, as control of land shifted to those in the countryside.[15] To Sakamoto Shōzō and Kawane Yoshiyasu (b. 1933), this decentralization of power came to represent the "feudalization" of Japan.[16]

Toda Yoshimi (1929–1991), one of the pioneering historians at Tokyo University in the postwar era, saw the tenth century in a similar vein, noting likewise the changes that occurred in administration and control of land during that period. He concurred with Ishimoda about the emergence of a royal-court state, but added more specific characteristics: rule based on serf-like small-scale agriculture; a basic class-struggle between nobles and local land holders, on the one hand, and farmers, on the other; provincial headquarters and laws that displayed patterns of feudal relations. The Marxist terminology in such scholarship escapes no one today and Toda did indeed consider the tenth century the beginning of what he called the "early feudal period," a crucial shift away from the centered state envisioned by the state-creators of the seventh and eighth centuries.[17] Ishimoda had suggested something along the same lines, as he saw land structures and provincial rule as developing feudal patterns of class conflict even as the state was still controlled by the ancient nobility.[18] Following these interpretations, a number of scholars came to think of this royal-court state as the beginning of a medieval feudal state.[19]

I have addressed the problems associated with committing an interpretation of Japan, or of any society for that matter, based on a feudal paradigm elsewhere, but suffice it to say that Japanese scholars began prescribing to a notion of historical stages based on the Marxist view of development in the Meiji period, when there were deliberate attempts to equate Japan's historical stages with those of the West, efforts that have continued well into the present.[20] Ishimoda's contrived efforts at reconciling what he saw as emerging "feudal" relations in the countryside with aristocratic rule provide a telling example of the extent to which historians have to, and sometimes still do, fit the evidence into a theory in order to make it work. There is, moreover, another significant problem with this approach. Assuming the existence of a feudal stage, in which decentralization of power is one of the main characteristics, establishes a preconceived notion of the nature of the society it presumes to examine. In other words, if we insist on seeing the *shōen* and the royal-court state as being feudal, then we have already determined that the Heian period is an age of decline from a more centered ancient state.

In contrast to the interpretations offered by Toda, Sakamoto, and others, recent scholarship has put more emphasis on the *shōen* as endowing the central elites with *more direct control* of land

through the ingenious division of rights to income reflecting an inclusive approach to property. Viewed from a different perspective, the local managerial class, aiming to increase their own control and income, found it more advantageous to align themselves with noble proprietors and patrons than to try and disengage themselves from the capital elites. Just as provincial powers might gain authority by aligning themselves with more powerful central rulers, so, too, were lesser local notables willing to seek patronage from central elites, thereby strengthening the presence of the center in the provinces. This patronage was, in short, essential for local powers to survive when the laws of the statutory state provided less protection than they were intended to do. Consequently, any attempt to disregard the central elites prior to the Genpei War of 1180–1185 was doomed to fail, as evidenced by numerous instances in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Although often noted as a sign of the rise of provincial powers, the failed uprising of Taira no Masakado (?–940) in 935–939 stands out as a particularly representative example of the court's ability to suppress dissidence and retain control.[21]

Whereas the regency would seem to correspond to the idea of a court-centered state, it cannot be denied that other changes took place during that very same period. Some of them were intimately connected to the regency itself, such as the slow and gradual spread of private estates discussed above. Another important development during the first half of the Heian period was the establishment of Buddhist temples throughout Japan's main islands (except for Hokkaido, which was not claimed until the Tokugawa age). This period saw the construction of numerous cloisters and smaller temples in the capital region as well as at more distant places, such as along the Japan Sea coast, often close to areas with an already strong tradition of *kami* (local deities) worship.

Nevertheless, even though the establishment of a new temple was easy for those with means to do so (in other words, for those able to donate property and resources to the new temple), such patronage was difficult to guarantee over time, and many temples ran into problems because of a lack of institutional and religious affiliations when the state or the founding patron could no longer provide protection or support. These insecurities resulted in a large number of requests from patrons or their descendants to have temples recognized as special imperial temples (*goganji*, imperial-vow temples), but the state could not keep up with the demand. Instead, in the Heian period, it was to the major temples—such as Enryakuji, Kōfukuji, Tōdaiji, Onjōji, and Tōji—that smaller temples turned for protection. This resulted in the establishment of hierarchical ties between smaller and larger temples throughout Japan, making the former into branches (*matsuji*).[22] As occurred in the case of *shōen*, this was part of a process of privatization that shifted control of assets away from the imperial state. And yet, the new hierarchical ties that developed between local strongmen and the central elites in fact strengthened the center's influence in the provinces, giving those who constituted the imperial court more direct control over land.

In this context, both religious and courtly rituals took on a new level of importance. While always crucial in legitimizing rulers and others within the circle of power, rituals became an indispensable tool during the Heian period as factional struggles intensified and private assets played a larger role in determining one's sociopolitical position. Owing to their early influence, the Northern Fujiwara had promoted their family temple, Kōfukuji and dominated the three most important Buddhist rituals for close to three centuries. Of course, this did not prevent other branches and families from attempting to promote alternative rituals, many of which benefitted the two Tendai centers of Enryakuji and Onjōji. In some cases, we also find nobles promoting different centers and ceremonies without any thought of doctrinal conflicts, as they were more interested in the efficacy of different ceremonies and the institutional patronage than in the details of doctrine. As temples benefitted from such support, they also grew more independent, looking

for patrons and allies of their own accord, something that came to the fore in the late eleventh century, when the imperial family staged a comeback vis-à-vis the Fujiwara.[23]

As noted earlier, many scholars interpret the changes that took place in the tenth century as being part of a larger trend toward privatization. For example, Furuse Natsuko pointed out that the relationships between the emperor on the one hand and the regent, members of the Imperial Secretariat (Chamberlain's Office, *kurōdo dokoro*), and the high-ranking nobles, on the other, became more "private" from the late ninth century. Although she did not specify in detail how those changes took place or how they were different from "public" relations, it is a point worth considering, given how the regents interacted with sitting and future emperors.[24] Building on this theme, G. Cameron Hurst III (b. 1941), in an early essay focusing on the familial authority of the Heian state, effectively described how the household organizations of the larger noble families in the capital became private means of power and administration. Directors (*bettō*) and household officials (*keryō*, later *keishi*) from the ranks of mid-level aristocrats originally held public positions as well, but already by the early Heian age, these officials were largely seen as having a private private-client relationship with their lords.[25]

Considering these developments, it would be no exaggeration to claim that there is a broad consensus about the substantial changes that occurred in the tenth century. But there is far less agreement about what this transition actually meant in a larger historical perspective. Some have emphasized the resilience of the old system by pointing to the continued importance of the throne (if not always the emperor himself since he tended to be a minor under the control of the Fujiwara chieftain), its various organs and rituals, thus placing the tenth century within the classical period. Others argue that the royal-court state was an entirely new way of rule with new institutions and titles, thus belonging to something we might call the early medieval or "feudal" age as noted above.[26]

In the former camp, we find Satō Sōjun (b. 1939), who labeled the new polity one of "noble rule" (*kizoku seiken*). As such, he argued that it was based on the statutory state rather than departing from it, and thus constituted a development of the system that had been established in the seventh and eighth centuries. The central point in this interpretation is the role played by the regents, who, by ruling on behalf of the emperor, were seen as continuing a system dominated by the same elites, even if some of the mechanism was located outside the structures of the bureaucratic state.[27]

On the opposite side, we find scholars who have stressed the medieval (*chūsei-teki*) character of the second half of the Heian age. The well-known historian Satō Shin'ichi (b. 1916), for example, equated *ōchō kokka* with the medieval state, although he maintained that the transition took place in the twelfth century when certain imperial offices, such as scribes and record keepers, became associated with specific families. In other words, he saw yet another aspect of privatization as a key trend.[28] Toda Yoshimi revised this argument, claiming that *ōchō kokka* was not equal to the medieval state, but merely the early stage of feudalism, a period of transition toward a medieval period.[29]

Different interpretations of the nature of Japan's royal-court state naturally have a direct impact on how scholars define the end of it. Both Toda and Sakamoto saw the royal-court state as continuing to the establishment of the Kamakura Bakufu in the late twelfth century, thus including also the *insei* period.[30] In contrast, Kawane Yoshiyasu regarded the *insei* period as fundamentally different from that of the royal-court state, and so concluded the end to have come in 1086, when Shirakawa resigned as emperor, beginning what many have seen as rule by retired emperors. Kawane argued that the main difference lay in the emergence of a warrior aristocracy and local warriors as landlords during that period, and therefore concluded the *insei* age to be "medieval."[31] It is, however, difficult to see any kind of warrior state emerging at that

point—as some critics of Kawane have already pointed out—and yet, many scholars have argued that the rule by retired emperors marks a transition into a new order rather than being merely an extension of the royal-court state.[32]

The royal-court state theory has helped historians and students better understand the mid-Heian period by emphasizing the adjustments and changes that occurred within the administrative structures. But at the same time, it has failed to address issues outside the capital region, such as the relationship between the center and provincial headquarters or the political structures within the provinces, or the role played by noblewomen within the court.[33] Still, describing the period largely dominated by Fujiwara chieftains as a royal-court state does not seem inappropriate when it comes to the continued centrality of the capital elites in the sociopolitical structures of the early- to mid-Heian age.

Insei: rule by retired emperors

By the late eleventh century, domination of the imperial court at the hands of the Fujiwara came to an end when their chieftain Yorimichi (992–1074) ran out of options to put male descendants on the throne. Although he had managed to exert influence through his sisters, Yorimichi's own daughters were unable to produce male heirs. Reluctantly, he was forced to allow Go-Sanjō (1034–1073; r. 1068–1072), who was not only independent of the Fujiwara chieftain but also an adult, to ascend the throne in 1068. Go-Sanjō detested the Fujiwara and proceeded to take measures to limit the influence of his adversaries. For instance, he issued edicts to restrict the creation of new *shōen*, even attempting to disallow those created after 1045 retroactively. To further improve the financial foundation of the imperial family, he converted estates that had been confiscated into "imperial edict fields" (*chokushiden*), an innovative attempt to establish an extensive land-base for the imperial family outside the confines of the bureaucratic state. Notwithstanding, Go-Sanjō's biggest concern was with imperial succession, which had been firmly under Fujiwara control for two centuries. In other words, no matter Go-Sanjō's innovative policies, they could all be reverted once he died, and since he was in poor health, he addressed the succession issue by naming Prince Sukehito (1053–1129; r. 1072–1086; *in* 1086–1129) crown prince and prepared for his own resignation while he was still in power. Sukehito, known under his imperial name as Shirakawa, ascended the throne in 1072, proving to be a worthy successor.[34] As a review of his policies and initiatives will reveal, Shirakawa might even be considered one of the greatest sovereigns of the entire Heian period.

Like his father, Shirakawa began by addressing the fundamental problem of privatization of land, repeating Go-Sanjō's prohibition against the formation of new *shōen* in 1075, which was also proclaimed by his successors in 1087 and 1099. But Shirakawa went further. Realizing the need to have control over more estates, he encouraged the creation of new estates (despite his own prohibition against them) in the name of imperial consorts once they had produced male heirs to the throne. A second strategy was to assign public land in various provinces directly to retainers, such as the Ise Taira. Such land became known as "proprietary provinces" (*chigyō koku*), creating, in essence, two parallel, privatized land hierarchies between the *shōen* and the remaining provincial land.[35] A third strategy, attesting to Shirakawa's ambitions and ingenuity, was to extend the imperial family's influence over the religious sector. For instance, he sponsored the construction of sub-cloisters at established temples in an effort to gather direct connections and allies, placing princes who were not contenders for the throne as abbots there. He also built numerous new temples, where he favored schools that were not associated with the Fujiwara, or where he could replace the Fujiwara as the main patron. These new temples needed some religious affiliation, and in most of those cases, Shirakawa favored Tendai and Shingon, appointing

abbots of his choosing from among already established temples. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Shirakawa began promoting his own set of rituals as essential to the imperial family, effectively challenging the three principal rituals under control of the Fujiwara. The latter were known as Sandai'e (the "Three Lectures," two of which were held in Nara), for which reason the new rituals promoted by Shirakawa became known as Hokkyō no Sandai'e (the "Three Lectures of the Northern Capital"). Eventually, Shirakawa also tried to elevate his own temples, most of which were located in the relatively unused eastern area of the capital, above those of the Fujiwara by calling them "the family temples of the sovereign of the state" (*kokuō no ujidera*).[36]

These dramatic changes did not come about without resistance or challenges. The Northern Fujiwara leadership did not sit idly by as Shirakawa attempted to expand his power at the expense of the regental family. In point of fact, Shirakawa was initially unable to impose his will; most of the initiatives noted above actually started shortly after the (un)timely deaths of two important Fujiwara leaders in 1099 (Moromichi, 1062–1099) and 1101 (Morozane, 1042–1101). This opened up the playing field for Shirakawa to promote his initiatives in earnest over the opposition of the regental branch, which nevertheless continued to exert influence as the second most powerful family in the capital throughout the twelfth century. But there was other opposition as well. As Shirakawa promoted monks and Buddhist schools close to himself, specifically Shingon and the Onjōji branch of Tendai, he also encountered severe resistance from the more established monasteries. Heading that resistance were Enryakuji and Kōfukuji, though the latter stood to lose the most in this conflict given its position as the Fujiwara family temple. Reacting to these sudden and new religious policies, which also tended to affect appointments to established rituals and to abbotships, the major temples engaged in a new strategy to communicate with the imperial court and its leaders. That strategy is what might best be translated as "divine demonstrations" (*gōso*, literally "forceful protest"), which consisted of members of monastic and shrine communities who traveled to the capital bearing *kami* symbols in order to protest a perceived wrong afflicted on their temple. Temples such as Enryakuji and Tōdaiji brought *kami* palanquins (*mikoshi* or *shin'yo*) while the Kōfukuji clergy brought a branch of the holy *sakaki* tree (*shinmoku* or *shinboku*). These demonstrations became highly successful since the clergy would leave the holy object in Kyoto if no satisfactory resolution was reached, putting substantial spiritual pressure on the court.[37]

The *gōso* themselves may seem like little more than curious footnotes in a rich history of religious debates, conflicts, violence, and disputes over land, branches, and abbotships, but they were a major concern for contemporary nobles, and they are in fact symptomatic of much more important developments. The factionalism that had originally embroiled the imperial family and its closest supporters in disputes over succession to the throne in the Nara age had spread significantly by the late eleventh century to engage entire noble families, temple-shrine complexes of tremendous wealth and military stature, as well as military retainers. By the middle of the twelfth century, a group of military nobles, such as the Ise Taira (or Heike) and the Seiwa Minamoto, had emerged as powerful elites in their own right. The upper echelon of Japanese society had in other words become pluralized as a direct result of the ongoing privatization.

What was different about this age, beginning with Shirakawa, was that the imperial family had now figured out that it could wield more power from behind the throne than while sitting on it. Shirakawa had resigned in 1086 in favor of his son Horikawa (1079–1107; r. 1086–1107), in order to control imperial succession, as Go-Sanjō had done before him. When he later had Horikawa resign in favor of his grandson (Toba, 1103–1156, r. 1107–1123, retired emperor 1129–1156) and then repeated the procedure some years later, Shirakawa had in effect privatized the imperial family itself. The actual pinnacle of the pyramid was no longer the sovereign—although his symbolic value was of supreme importance in legitimizing the positions of those

surrounding or supporting him—but rather the chieftain of the imperial family. This is the meaning of rule by retired emperors (*insei*), an era that has in general been seen to last from 1086 to 1185. It was characterized not just by the resurgence of the imperial family, but in fact by a new type of rule, one that can be best described as cooperative rulership between numerous powerful blocs. This is the essence of the *kenmon* theory, to which we will now turn.

Kenmon taisei: a theory of collaborative rule

In the 1960s, the Japanese historian Kuroda Toshio (1926–1993) began advocating that Japan's ruling structures from the late eleventh through the fifteenth centuries were characterized by a sharing of power among several elite groups known as *kenmon* ("gates of power"). Originally consisting of the imperial family, the Fujiwara, and the elite temples, Kuroda saw these various powers as developing into three distinct groups by the late twelfth century: court nobles (*kōke* or *kuge*, merging the imperial family with influential courtiers), temples and shrines (*jisha* or *sōke*), and the warrior aristocracy (*buke*). While occasionally in competition, these blocs shared the responsibilities of governance in three spheres—court, religious, and military matters—but also operated collaboratively in an interdependent manner under the auspices of the imperial state.[38]

One of the main characteristics of a *kenmon* was, according to Kuroda, that they used private assets to perform the functions of government, issuing orders in matters of governance from their own administrative headquarters. The *kenmon*'s headquarters, then, took on a quasi-official role, as orders were issued to deal with matters of state as well. The first institutions to develop such organs were the major temples and the Fujiwara, followed eventually by retired emperors who established the *in-no-chō* (the retired emperor's administrative headquarters). By the late twelfth century, elite warriors also followed suit culminating with the establishment of the Kamakura Bakufu. By the same token, these elites also maintained their own military retainers, who were used both for personal protection of assets and to maintain the peace in a more official capacity. Finally, the *kenmon* had substantial judicial rights over their own lineage as well over their various assets. Accordingly, succession within a *kenmon* temple, although theoretically the prerogative of the emperor or its main patron, was decided by its members, just as the Northern Fujiwara handled its own succession to the chieftainship.[39] For example, the appointment of the head abbot of the Fujiwara family temple, Kōfukuji, was made by the Fujiwara chieftain, though the successful appointee was commonly recommended by the clergy. If a different monk was appointed, it would invariably result in protests from the temple. In 1100, perhaps already sensing the weakening of the Fujiwara regent line following the death of Morozane the previous year, Shirakawa appointed the monk Hanshun assistant head abbot at Kōfukuji even though he had been trained primarily in the school of Shingon. The clergy was clearly dissatisfied, and the tensions only increased when Hanshun was given the honor of leading the important Yuima ceremony the following year. Shortly thereafter, some retainers of Shirakawa were accused of having encroached on Kōfukuji property, which resulted in outright brawls between factions within the temple as well as divine protests that lasted into 1103. In the end, Shirakawa could not impose his will or replace Fujiwara sons as abbots at Kōfukuji, but his attempts to extend his influence reflects the two most important trends in the early twelfth century: the increasing power of the retired emperor and the co-dependence of the courtly, religious, and military spheres.[40]

The impact of such events on the bureaucratic hierarchy was substantial, since the Fujiwara chieftain normally served as regent, and the abbot of a major monastery would serve as the ceremonial master at rituals for the court, the emperor, or the state. But this all played out based on private assets and supporters, and not by virtue of hierarchical titles at court. The retired emperor

could not control matters within Kōfukuji despite being the head of the imperial family, and the Fujiwara chieftain was almost as futile in his attempts to deal with the unruly clergy. Similarly, each *kenmon*'s assets were considered to be under the exclusive judicial rights of its patrons, although allies and knowledge of judicial precedents were important when disputes occurred. For nobles, financial assets consisted mainly of *shōen*, but could also in later times apply to toll gates and market places. For temples and shrines, these possessions included estates as well as branch institutions. The latter were particularly essential since they contained human resources, land, and sometimes added spiritual prestige to the patron institution. One notable example is Tōnomine, which despite being located in Yamato not far away from Kōfukuji and being the effective mausoleum for Kamatari (the ancestral founder of the Fujiwara), was nevertheless a Tendai branch. This affiliation was the result of a monk named Son'ei trained at Enryakuji, who settled at Tōnomine and began attracting a number of students. Son'ei asked an abbot at Enryakuji for an affiliation, to which the Fujiwara regent at the time, the well-known Michinaga, agreed despite protests from the Kōfukuji clergy. By the late eleventh century, as competition intensified between the various elites, Tōnomine became a highly contested ground between Enryakuji and Kōfukuji, with the latter launching several outright attacks against the Tendai branch.[41] The appropriateness of Tōnomine's status was debated and it remained a thorn in the side of Kōfukuji for centuries, but what is important for the purpose of this chapter is its value as a devotional place to the Fujiwara chieftain and as an asset of land and human resources for Enryakuji.

Kuroda's *kenmon* theory was and has remained attractive to many scholars because it allows for religious institutions to be treated as not just religious but also political entities without preconceived, modern notions of a separation of state and church. From an institutional perspective, there is evidence in favor of the theory, as the blocs tended to collaborate more than compete with one another. In fact, disturbances were more common *within* each bloc—between the various *kenmon* of the same kind or between families—rather than between the blocs, which lends support to Kuroda's notion of a shared rulership. Further evidence can be found in an ideology that proclaimed the mutual dependence of the Imperial Law and the Buddhist Law, known as *ōbō buppō sōe* in contemporary records. According to this idea, the state and Buddhism were as dependent on each other as the two wings of a bird or the two wheels of a cart.[42]

There were, of course, critics of Kuroda's ideas. First, as Taira Masayuki (b. 1951; a student of Kuroda) noted, the three blocs were never equal in terms of either political power or, more importantly, internal coherence. Whereas the imperial court functioned as the pinnacle of the court bloc, and the shogunate of the warriors, there was no equivalent on the religious side. Indeed, the lack of a clear pinnacle in the religious bloc constitutes one of the major differences between the *kenmon* in Kuroda's theory.[43] Second, seeing that temples were less unified, one might also question whether they were as independent as members of the court and the warrior elites. The *kenmon* temples served mainly the noble elites and were as such in a subservient relationship with them, though this should in no way be taken to mean that they were fully dependent upon their patrons or somehow weak. As numerous conflicts, demonstrations, and arguments indicate, these temples could on occasion cause enough concern to shut down the imperial court itself.

Perhaps the most vocal critic of Kuroda's theory was Nagahara Keiji (1922–2004), who focused primarily on the tail end of the period. While Kuroda was clear about the beginning of the *kenmon* age coinciding with Shirakawa's *insei*, he was far less obvious about when it ended. A careful reading reveals that he suggested the Ōnin War of 1466–1477 to have dealt the final blow to this kind of collaborative rule. In doing so, he emphasized a strong tie between the estate system and the *kenmon*, inasmuch as the former were finally obliterated, as local warriors came to take control of regional areas irrespective of the old estate boundaries.[44]

Later scholars have even tried to extend the notion of *kenmon* rule to the late sixteenth century, claiming that some of the traditional elites continued to wield political and military power.[45] Such studies, however, ignore the central importance of judicial privileges, which were challenged by the Ashikaga shogunate, and the ideological foundation of the interdependence of the Buddhist and Imperial Law, which experienced a decline as well.

Others, such as Nagahara, pointed out that Kuroda was correct in noting the continuities between the late Heian and Kamakura eras, but also criticized him for exaggerating the similarities between the Kamakura and Ashikaga shogunates. The former sustained the old Kyoto-centered system by containing the warrior class, while the latter took over most functions of the state, including appointments to religious institutions.[46]

Nagahara's critique has merit. There is undoubtedly a strong connection between the *kenmon* and the *shōen*, but private estates emerged prior to the *kenmon*, and so the *shōen* would seem to provide a precondition for the emergence of elites. Most importantly, if we are to see *kenmon* rule as being characterized by a division of rights and responsibilities, then the late fourteenth century would be a much more significant transition than any other period. Early leaders of the newly established Ashikaga shogunate deliberatively attempted to take over all aspects of rulership. For instance, they all but eliminated the many judicial rights held by the *kenmon* by taxing formerly immune areas, and by the time of the third shogun, Yoshimitsu (1358–1408; shogun 1368–1394), Kōfukuji was taken out of the hands of the Fujiwara in what would only have been seen as unthinkable just a century earlier. In addition, Yoshimitsu placed special envoys within Enryakuji in an attempt to extend the shogunate's control within the mightiest of the religious *kenmon*.[47]

In the end, it is problematic to see a continuation of a *kenmon system* beyond the turn of the fifteenth century, even if some temples continued to exert influence into the late sixteenth. By the same token, however, it is noteworthy that those temples that were the most powerful by that point included only one of the old elite temples (Enryakuji), while the others had lost much of their influence. In their stead, new, military strongholds had emerged, such as Negoroji, Kōyasan, and Honganji.

Over the past couple of decades, the *kenmon* theory has remained an important starting point for a generation of scholars, not all of whom can be covered in this short chapter, but one line of questions it has generated may serve as an illustration of its profound impact. Specifically, Kuroda's emphasis on the role played by the *kenmon* household organizations inspired many scholars to take a closer look at how they actually functioned. Satō Kenji (b. 1967), for example, examined the emergence of the Fujiwara household organization (*kasei soshiki*), and found that it came about around the time of the influential chieftain Fujiwara no Tadahira (880–949) in the early tenth century. In particular, he points to two important units within the court: the Kangakuin (initially set up as the imperial university dormitory) and the Seyakuin (a medical establishment for the poor and sick), which were put under the control of the Fujiwara in the late ninth century. One strong justification for this emphasis on Tadahira's role is evidenced when the Shingon center Tōji complained against alleged intrusions into its property in the Ōyama Estate in 920. Tōji filed its petition directly with Tadahira, instead of using the official and established channel through the Council of State. Interestingly, Satō also claims that temples such as Enryakuji transformed themselves into *kenmon* by emphasizing their service to the state, while the Fujiwara accomplished that transformation by removing themselves from the established state structure. In this way, he shows that while the result may have been similar, the roads to becoming an elite institution with public responsibilities and vast private assets varied between each bloc. By emphasizing the importance of the tenth century, Satō's conclusion contrasts with Kuroda's insofar that he argues that the *kenmon*-ification of the regental line of the Fujiwara marks the beginning of the age of the *kenmon* and thus also the medieval age.[48]

Focusing on the same topic of household organizations, Ihara Kesao (b. 1949) came to a very different conclusion. While acknowledging the importance of the *kenmon*, Ihara denies their private nature, arguing instead that they should be considered public administrative units. He bases much of his argument on appointments to these organs, which were often made in official decrees issued from the emperor's office. Accordingly, Ihara sees the *kenmon*, their assets, and their management as an extension of imperial state administration, and places emphasis back on the emperor and the organs within the imperial court. In fact, he argues that regardless of who was in charge—the emperor, the Fujiwara regent, or the retired emperor—there was little difference in the way authority was exercised or the way the elites ruled. Thus, to Ihara, the *kenmon* did not represent a change from earlier structures; he viewed the royal-court state as lasting to the end of the Heian period.[49]

The debate about the nature of the changes that occurred during the Heian age continued following Ihara's work, and many scholars have voiced their critique to what they see as downplaying those changes.[50] For the purpose of this chapter, it is perhaps most important to note that both the *ōchō kokka* and *kenmon taisei* theories were created exactly to describe those changes and that the ongoing debate about periodization based on new inquiries are strong signs of the importance and impact of those concepts.

Ōchō kokka and *kenmon taisei* – a question of periodization

Ultimately, both the concept of a royal-court state and a collaborative rule by "gates of power" are tied to historians' understanding of change over time and periodization. Japanese scholars committed to a historical division based on a Western model have spent much time and energy trying to match Japanese developments to stages they considered to be foundational for all societies. The major challenge for them, one might argue, was how to explain the exceptional survival of Japanese political and social institutions despite dramatic developments in other areas, such as the economy. For example, despite a decline of the statutory state and the emergence of private estates, the central elites maintained control of the provinces for numerous centuries, and the imperial institution seems to have continued as the pinnacle of the state. Furthermore, the emergence of the Kamakura shogunate did not, as many historians once assumed, result in the immediate decline of court rule. Such realizations made it challenging for scholars to explain Japanese history in terms of simple stages of noble rule being replaced by warrior rule, or a centralized court-state being replaced by a decentralized "feudal" society. Various interpretations of the royal-court state as either an extension of the classical, noble state or as an early "feudal" society, or attempts made to describe the Heian period as one of decline when the changes that took place in effect secured more direct control of the countryside by the elites, illustrate the problems associated with such efforts.

If we dispense with the European periodization scheme, the theories introduced in this chapter are still helpful in conceptualizing the premodern age. Above all, the notion of a statutory and a royal-court state recognizes important differences in the socio-political structures of the two periods, pointing out changes that occurred during the early Heian period. The challenge is whether scholars choose to see the transition as coinciding with the establishment of the regency in the second half of the ninth century or during the broader changes that occurred in the tenth century. That, in turn, depends on whether the focus is put on the narrower unit of the imperial court and the capital, or whether one prefers to look for broader changes across various spectrums of society, in particular the countryside.

Since most periodization schemes are intimately connected to changes at the center, perhaps it might be most convenient to consider the *ōchō kokka* theory as coinciding with the regency

(858–1086), but also that it was a period of challenges and adjustments, resulting in a state-wide process of privatization that culminated in the *insei* period. Inasmuch as all roads did lead to Kyoto and that challenges of the capital elites were doomed to fail during that period, it might seem appropriate to think of it as one characterized by control by the royal court.

By the same token, the *kenmon* theory is a helpful way of conceptualizing the plurality of rulership during the late Heian and Kamakura periods. Its strength lies perhaps more than anything in the inclusion of religious institutions as political entities and in providing an explanation for their secular power. At the same time, Kuroda related the political system he saw to an ideological context of both Buddhism and Shinto, something that other concepts, including the *ōchō kokka* theory, failed to do. Yet, it should be acknowledged that both theories discussed in this chapter have their limitations. They cannot by themselves explain all aspects of their respective periods, and so one can easily find areas that need further exploration.

Were such theories able to explain everything—as grand theories like feudalism and oriental despotism tend to set out to do—they would, however, be too broad to have any substantive meaning. The most meaningful historical theories are those that can both be tested and provide a framework from which we can begin to grasp a society's general structures. From that perspective, the *ōchō kokka* and *kenmon* theories have been and continue to be highly valuable.

Notes

1 The Kusuko Incident is named after Fujiwara no Kusuko (?–810), who was the consort of Heizei. After his abdication, Heizei returned to Nara, but once he recovered, perhaps unexpectedly, Kusuko and her brother Nakanari (774–810) spurred Heizei to oppose his brother and re-ascend the throne. As part of this coup, the capital was to be transferred back to Nara. The rebellion failed, resulting in the execution of Nakanari and in Kusuko committing suicide, while Heizei was forced to live the remainder of his life as a monk rather than as a retired sovereign.
2 William H. McCullough, "The Heian Court, 794–1070," 59–60.
3 *Sekkan* is a combination of the first characters in the two terms *sesshō* and *kanpaku*, while the suffix *–ke* means "house" or "lineage." *Sekkanke* thus refers to the Regent's Line of the Fujiwara, which came to monopolize the two regent titles.
4 The successional struggles over the throne in England around the turn of the thirteenth century exemplify some of these challenges. Even within those uncertain circumstances, however, succession was conferred from older to younger son.
5 For more on Dōkyō in English, see Joan Piggott, "Tōdaiji and the Nara Imperium," 72–79; and Ross Bender, "The Hachiman Cult and the Dōkyō Incident," 125–163.
6 See for example, William McCullough, "Japanese Marriage Institutions in the Heian Period," 103–167 or Peter Nickerson, "The Meaning of Matrilocality: Kinship, Property, and Politics in Mid-Heian," 429–468.
7 For an in-depth treatment of Michinaga's political accomplishments in English, see G. Cameron Hurst III, "*Kugyō* and *Zuryō*: Center and Periphery in the Era of Fujiwara no Michinaga."
8 John Whitney Hall, one of the pioneering Japanese historians in North America, avoided the Marxist framework in his descriptions, but seemed to consider the privatization process a step backward, as a "return to familial authority" (*Government and Local Power*, chapter 4, "The *Shōen* System and the Return to Familial Authority"). See also Jeffrey P. Mass, *Antiquity and Anachronism in Japanese History*, 13–15.
9 Some Japanese scholars, such as Ihara Kesao, have argued that there were indeed no substantial differences at all in political procedures or even rulership during any of the various leaderships of the Heian age. See his *Nihon chūsei no kokusei to kasei*.
10 Ishimoda Shō, "Kodai no tenkan ki toshite no jūsei ki." I have benefitted from Sasaki Muneo's *Nihon ōchō kokka ron*, 3–8, for much of the survey of *ōchō kokka* scholarship.
11 Sakamoto Shōzō, *Nihon ōchō kokka taisei ron*, 3–7, 7–11; Ishimoda, *Kodai makki*, 26–39. In English, see Hurst, "*Kugyō* and *Zuryō*," 83–84.
12 The *jin no sadame* literally means "Council of the Guards," named after the location where it was held within the imperial palace.

13 Hashimoto Yoshihiko, "Kizoku seiken no seiji kōzō," 26–27.
14 See Charlotte von Verschuer, "Life of Commoners in the Provinces: The *Owari no gebumi* of 988."
15 See for example Inoue Mitsusada et al., *Shōsetsu Nihon shi*.
16 Sakamoto, *Nihon ōchō kokka taisei ron*; Sasaki, *Nihon ōchō kokka ron*, 6; Kawane Yoshiyasu, "Chūsei hōken jidai no tochi seidō to kaikyū kōzō," 3–18.
17 Toda Yoshimi, "Chūsei shakai seiritsu ki no kokka," 212–291, especially 225–229; Toda, "Chūsei seiritsu ki no kokka to nōmin," 18–32. See also Toda's "ōchō kokka" in *Chūsei handobukkui*, 109.
18 Ishimoda Shō, "Hōkenteki sho kankei no seichō"; Sakai, *Nihon ōchō kokka ron*, 8.
19 See in particular the aforementioned works by Sakamoto and Kawane.
20 Early attempts by Western scholars to evaluate the notion of "feudalism" in Japan include Asakawa Kan'ichi's "Feudalism: Japanese"; Rushton Coulborn's "Origin and Development of Feudalism in Japan and Western Europe"; Edwin Reischauer's "Japanese Feudalism"; and Peter Duus's *Feudalism in Japan*. By the 1980s, however, scholars were becoming skeptical of the construct, as exemplified by Jeffrey Mass's "The Early Bakufu and Feudalism." For recent summaries and arguments on the controversy, see Mikael Adolphson, "Social Change and Contained Transformations: Warriors and Merchants in Japan, 1000–1300"; Thomas Keirstead, "Inventing Medieval Japan: The History and Politics of National Identity"; Kierstead, "Medieval Japan: Taking the Middle Ages Outside Europe"; and Karl Friday, "The Futile Paradigm: In Quest of Feudalism in Early Medieval Japan."
21 See for example Soga Yoshinari's *Ōchō kokka seimu no kenkyū*, in which he argues for the continued vitality of the court and its rituals, albeit in a changed form. In English, see Mikael S. Adolphson, "Institutional Diversity and Religious Integration: The Establishment of Temple Networks in the Heian Age," 7. On Masakado's rebellion, see Karl Friday, *The First Samurai*. Taira no Tadatsune's case in the early eleventh century provides yet another example, as demonstrated by Karl Friday in his "Lordship Interdicted: Taira no Tadatsune and the Limited Horizons of Warrior Ambition."
22 See Adolphson, "Institutional Diversity and Religious Integration."
23 A prime example of how Fujiwara members sponsored other institutions can be found in Fujiwara no Morosuke's (908–960) patronage of the monk Tendai monk Ryōgen (912–985). See Neil McMullin's "The Lotus Sutra and Politics in the Mid-Heian Period," especially 129–133, and Paul Groner, *Ryōgen and Mt. Hiei*.
24 Furuse Natsuko, "Heian jidai no 'gishiki' to tennō," 36–45.
25 G. Cameron Hurst III, "The Structure of the Heian Court: Some Thoughts on the Nature of 'Familial Authority' in Heian Japan."
26 Sasaki, *Nihon ōchō kokka ron*, 3.
27 Satō Sōjun, *Heian zenki seiji shi yosetsu*, 19–23.
28 Satō Shin'ichi, *Nihon no chūsei kokka*, 11–62. See also Morita Tei, *Kenkyū shi ōchō kokka*, 4–5.
29 Toda, "Ōchō kokka," 109; Sakamoto, *Nihon ōchō kokka taiesei ron*, 7.
30 Toda, "Chūsei shakai seiritsu ki no kokka," 19, 29–31; Sakamoto, *Nihon ōchō kokka*; Sakai, *Nihon ōchō kokka ron*, 7.
31 Kawane Yoshiyasu, "Chūsei shakai seiritsu ki no nōmin mondai," 14–26; Kawane, "Chūsei hōken jidai no tochi seidō to kaikyū kōzō," 3–18; Sasaki, *Nihon ōchō kokka ron*, 7.
32 For Kawane critics, see Takada Makoto, "Nihon hōken shakai seiritsu ki no ni, san mondai," 1–10; Sasaki, *Nihon ōchō kokka ron*, 7.
33 Sasaki, *Nihon ōchō kokka ron*, 8. For an insightful treatment of how the roles of women changed within the imperial court, see Fukutō Sanae's "From Female Sovereign to Mother of the Nation: Women and Government in the Heian Period."
34 Hurst, *Insei*, 101–124; Adolphson, *Gates of Power*, 78–79.
35 Hurst, *Insei*, 128–129; Gomi Fumihiko, *Insei ki shakai no kenkyū* 139–141, 164–165; Adolphson, *Gates of Power*, 81–82.
36 Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, 84–88.
37 Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, 104–121.
38 Kuroda Toshio, *Nihon chūsei kokka to shūkyō*, 17–18, 20–21, 31; Kuroda, "Chūsei kokka to tennō," 277–280; Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, 10–15. It should be noted that Kuroda's main concern was to recognize religious institutions as legitimate political entities at a time when Buddhist temples in particular were criticized for having wielded too much political and military power. See also his *Jisha seiryoku: mō hitotsu chūsei no shakai*.
39 Kuroda, *Nihon chūsei kokka to shūkyō*, 7–11, 367; Kuroda, "Chūsei kokka to tennō," 269–270; Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, 12–13.

40 Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, 104–109.
41 Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, 92–96.
42 Kuroda, *Jisha seiryoku*, 48, 257; Kuroda, "The Buddhist Law and the Imperial Law"; Hirata Toshiharu, *Sōhei to bushi*, 124–126; Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, 15, 272–273.
43 Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, 15: Taira Masayuki, *Nihon chūsei no shakai to bukkyō*, 94–96.
44 Kuroda, *Jisha seiryoku*, 203–205; Kuroda, *Nihon chūsei no kokka to shūkyō*, 533, 539–543; Kuroda, "Chūsei no kokka to tennō," 291–294; Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, 289.
45 See Suzanne Gay, *The Moneylenders of Late Medieval Kyoto*. Kuroda noted the decline of the traditional rights of the *kenmon* in *Jisha seiryoku*, 207–208 and *Nihon chūsei no kokka to shūkyō*, 535–538. See also, Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, 289.
46 Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, 291: Nagahara Keiji, "Nihon kokka shi no ichi mondai," 48.
47 Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, 325–342.
48 Satō Kenji, *Chūsei kenmon no seiritsu to kasei*. For a treatment in English of Tadahira, see Joan Piggott, "Court and Provinces under the Regent Fujiwara no Tadahira."
49 Ihara Keaso, *Nihon chūsei no kokusei to kasei*, especially 19–20, 41, 44–47.
50 See for example, Endō Motoo, *Chūsei ōken to ōchō girei* (Tokyo: San'yōsha, 2008).

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8

The court and its provinces

Producing and distributing wealth in classical society, 700–1200

Detlev Taranczewski

Living in a modern national state makes us prone to take Japan's strong cultural and political homogeneity for granted. But looking back on the history of the Japanese archipelago, we recognize that for most of the last 15,000 years it was split by its topography into various cultural regions.

A fundamental change occurred during the period from 700 to 1200. The greater part of the archipelago was joined into a coherent whole. Power and wealth were concentrated, step by step, in a metropolitan court, a centripetal social order developed, integrating even regions remote from the capital. Rule by a royal court was established through a long series of conflicts, eventually finding acceptance among at least the majority of the old regional elites. From this point forward, exchange of knowledge, people, and goods between the center and its regions increased to an extent never known before. The cultural, political, economic, and social coherence created during this period determined the shape of the archipelago to the present day.

This chapter introduces the important steps and factors in this process. The dynamism of the dichotomy between center and periphery, social stratification and social movements, institutions of land use and taxation will be the main subjects of discussion.[1] The chapter concludes with information about further reading, methods of research, and special subjects of discussion in the field.

Establishing a relationship between the center and periphery under the *ritsuryō* system

Premodern societies can be compared to icebergs. Only a small part sticks out above the surface of the water, but we know that this portion is supported by an invisible 80 or 90 percent of the ice. Historical documents may captivate us by their vivid and suggestive depiction of characters and events, but they are strongly biased, because of their origin in the sphere of ruling elites. The ruled majority of the population is only sporadically sketched from their own perspectives. Documents make ruling elites appear as the principal actors, even when they were in reality merely reacting to the actions of the ruled.

In classical Japan, the period spanning the late seventh to the late twelfth centuries, ruling elites were, in fact, divided into several blocks and factions, with antagonistic interests from time

to time. Often, moreover, it is not easy to draw a sharp line between the ruling and the ruled. For the classical era, we can differentiate between the members of the central elite—including the royal house, court nobility, and great religious institutions—on the one hand, and the members of the regional elites—many of who had roots in the class of pre-*ritsuryō* regional chiefs (*zaichi shuchō*)—on the other hand.

It also seems useful to make a principal analytical difference between the ruling class profiting from the labor of working people, and the state bureaucracy, which had to mediate between diverging social segments belonging to the ruling stratum; this very special role is one of the important subjects of studies of *ritsuryō* society.[2]

The great category of "the ruled" was also subdivided into several statuses. Most of this population were peasants, who produced various goods for tax and performed statute labor on the side. In addition, groups of craftsmen and manufacturers were active in the capital and in the regional political centers.

Important steps for establishing a centralized political system were taken during the late seventh and early eighth centuries. The adoption and adaptation of political theories and law (*ritsuryō*) and other knowledge transfer from the Chinese subcontinent developed into a strong instrument of power aimed, most fundamentally, at making the resources of the whole imperium (*tenka*) accessible to the rapidly developing center.

In times of socio-political revolution, no society begins with a blank slate. We need to gain a realistic view of ways and methods chosen by the actors to cope with the challenges of building a type of state they had never experienced. In the following pages I discuss the crucial economic aspects of this process.

The soil and its tillers being the main sources of wealth in an agrarian society, the chief target of the central elites was to find methods for controlling the land and the people working on it.[3] A territorial administration was established in order to incorporate the regional and local elites. This administration was framed by a hierarchical system combining offices and ranks, equally subsuming central and regional elites, and leaving scant room for social mobility. Ranks and offices were vested with particular rights to income and other perquisites that were specified and controlled by special divisions of the central administration. At the apex of this hierarchy was a king or queen for whom the title *tennō* (most commonly rendered in English as "emperor") came into use from the late seventh century.

This hierarchy was built upon a foundation of subordinate officers nearly excluded from the higher system of ranks and offices. Soon after founding Heijō-kyō (Nara) in 712 as a residential city for the monarch and his or her court, the number of inhabitants increased to around 100,000, comprised mostly of craftsmen and servicemen of all kinds, along with their families.

Becoming integrated into the system of ranks and offices simultaneously meant divesting all members of the elite of their traditional personal rights over lands and people. The king became the supreme lord over all people and land, including arable fields (especially rice paddies), rivers, and the sea. Common use of wastelands for woodcutting, fishing, or for hunting and gathering was guaranteed by law.

The state bureaucracy built up in this process had to guarantee the interests of the ruling elites as a whole. An important element of its policies was to ensure the survival of the labor forces on which the elites depended. In order to establish and maintain control over people and land, the bureaucracy recorded the entire population in household registers, to establish a general status of royal subjects that excluded only the small number of slaves.[4] A system for allocation of farmland (mainly paddy fields) was introduced, and the imperium was divided into provinces. With the promulgation of the Taihō *ritsuryō* in 702, the provinces came under administrative oversight by

jurist-legates dispatched from the capital, and a bureaucratic system tying together the provinces and center was established. Historians refer to this new polity as the *ritsuryō* state.

Censuses were conducted and new household registers prepared every six years (later changed to every twelve years). A substantial number of these household registers survive today, and have been heavily mined by historians for information about *ritsuryō* era demographics. One must be careful, however, when analyzing these documents. Because the function of household registers was fiscal, it is difficult to gain a realistic image of the family life based only on these data.[5]

Household registers (*koseki*) served as the base for both taxes (goods in kind and labor service) and for allotting farmland. One household (*ko*), comprising twenty to thirty members (*kokō*), consisted of one or more nuclear families, a small number of unrelated clients (*kikō*), and sometimes a few slaves (*nuhi*). The names, age, sex, physical conditions, and legal status (free or unfree) of the household members were recorded, along with the name of the household head (*henushi*), who was responsible to the authorities, and the name of the community (*gō*) to which the household belonged. Taxes were then assessed on the basis of these data.

All adult males without rank aged 17–65 and in good physical condition were subject to taxes. Tax rolls for collecting the taxes in kind (*yō*, *chō*) were drawn up every year. These levies consisted of a great variety of local products (rice, raw silk, cloth, iron and other metals, wood, products of hunting and gathering, salt or seafood and the like). Tax-eligible households were compelled to cultivate certain crops, such as mulberry trees for sericulture. Corvée labor (*zōyō*), performed in either the capital or in the provinces, included work on public projects, such as irrigation installations for paddy fields, road construction, public buildings, or the production and transport of special goods. Obligations varied over time, and with the age of the laborer, running anywhere from fifteen to sixty days a year.

About 80 percent of arable land (principally paddy fields) was assigned as *kubunden* ("fields allotted per person"); the rest was leased to cultivators on a year-by-year basis, for an annual rent of 20 percent of the assessed yield. The area of *kubunden* allotted to a household depended on the age, sex, and status of its members, and field tax (*so*) was levied on it at a rate of only 3–5 percent.[6]

This indicates that "personal taxes" (*yō*, *chō*, and *zōyō*) played a much more important role in the tax system than "area taxes" (*so*). We can conclude from this that the main objective for allotting land was stabilization of the economic base—that is, of taxable labor. At the same time, casting the system in terms of a welfare policy in which cultivators were provided with the means (i.e., their fields) in exchange for taxes fit nicely with the ethical self–image propagated by the state in order to promote the acceptance of its rule.

In addition to *kubunden*, households also controlled homesteads (*entakuchi*), consisting of living quarters, barns and granaries and other buildings, the ground they were built upon, and surrounding gardens used as dry fields for cultivating mulberry or lacquer trees for tax crops or the farmers' subsistence. Unlike allotment lands, homesteads were not subject to redistribution, and their inhabitants held relatively stable rights to their use.[7]

Households were collected into communities (first called *ri*, later on *gō*) of fifty households, represented by a head (*gōchō*). Similarly to the households, the *gō*-communities were conceived as fiscal units, their scope and actual geographic boundaries were not noted in the records.[8] Between two and twenty such communities formed a district (*gun* or *kōri*), which—unlike *gō*—had an area that was clearly described in real territorial units. The head of the district office (*gunji*) was recommended by the governor of the province, but appointed by the central administration.[9]

Gunji terms of office were not clearly delimited. In the early *ritsuryō* era, they were mostly recruited from among the traditionally powerful families of the region. Their power and authority in local and regional society made them the decisive link between the tax-paying population

and the central government. Depending on the size of a district, the number of the officials ranged between two and eight, and these were assisted by an unspecified number of assistants and followers (*gunji-shitei*).

The responsibilities of the *gunji* included collecting taxes, local jurisdiction, organizing statute labor, and maintaining irrigation infrastructure. They were also responsible for oversight of granaries that stocked rice for times of need (*gisō*), and for a system of loaning rice seed compulsorily to cultivators at interest, collected after each harvest. This system, *suiko*, was later incorporated into the field tax. Rent from paddies allotted to them on the basis of their rank and office (*shiki-den*) formed their official income, but district officials supplemented this with private rice loans (*shi-suiko*).

District officers were answerable to the province office, which was headed by provincial officials (*kokushi*) recruited from court nobility, dispatched to their assigned provinces for four years, and obliged to return to the capital after their term of office.[10] *Kokushi* represented central power over regional society—in contrast to the *gunji*, who were representatives of the local or regional society, with strong tendencies toward autonomy based on traditional local structures. Sixty provinces (*kuni*) were designated at the end of the seventh century, but the number fluctuated over time. Depending on the size of a province, the provincial office was overseen by a governor assisted by up to eight officers, who were in turn attended by subordinates (*zōshikinin*) recruited in the province from the circles of district magistrate families. Their office incomes, paid from the provincial treasury, were fixed according to their rank and their office. Governors were allowed to exploit fallow land near the site of the provincial office and to lease it to farmers.

Governors were responsible for the treasury of their province, organizing household registers, tax-rolls, land-registers (*denseki*), and field-plans (*denzu*) with details about site, size, category (*kubunden*, etc.), quality, and the tillers of every piece of land. Field maps formed the basis for the field allotments carried out by the provincial administration and for leasing lands (called *jōden*) not assigned as *kubunden*. Provincial officials were also charged with carrying out projects planned by the central government. In practice, this involved duties not unlike those of the *gunji* on the district level, including *suiko* loans to the farmers and even prayers for good weather. One of their most important functions was—in cooperation with the *gunji*—the organization of projects for installing and maintaining irrigation and drainage systems. Governors had also to take care of the shrines in their provinces, which were generally under much less central control than Buddhist temples.[11]

The provincial office represented the highest jurisdictional authority for the population. The governor was charged with overseeing the people's moral conduct, and was expected to conduct "benevolent rule" (*zensei*), "caressing the people" (*bumin*). On the other hand, sending a "letter of praise for good government" (*zenjō*) or a "letter of grievance" (*ureejō*) to the central government represented an institutionalized form by which the people of a province were able to submit opinions regarding the governor's behavior.[12] The full range of Confucian ethics of rulers was mustered up for these documents.

In addition to these agriculture-centered functions, the governor was also the highest military and police authority, the officers of which were mostly recruited from among *gunji* families and followers. From these circles, candidates were selected for guardsman service at the court or in houses of high-ranking court nobles and *uneme* serving as—generally lower-ranking—court ladies.[13] Men and women of local magistrate origin in this way were supposed to fashion ties between the court and the regional societies.

The headquarters of the provincial government were situated in a small residential town (*kokufu*) with a grid-shaped layout similar to that of the capital. In addition to the administrational offices, a provincial school (*kokugaku*) was established for the education of the regional

elites, especially the *gunji* class. Education was in the hands of "provincial teachers" (*kuni-hakase*) sent down from the capital. Students with excellent performance had the chance of being sent to the capital to continue their studies in the *daigakuryō*, with a chance for advancement in rank and office. A medical officer (*i-hakase*) was responsible for the organization of medical care. The rest of the buildings consisted of houses for service workers of various kinds, workshops, manufactories, and shelters for statutory workers. A market was opened for exchanging goods of local and external origin. The provincial administration played an important role in the transfer of technical knowledge from the center, especially on agriculture, water management, and hydraulic engineering.[14]

The mediating tradition of Buddhism as a universal religious system had proved its capability for spiritual and intellectual unification during the process of concentration of power within the central elite since the early seventh century, as highlighted by Shōtoku Taishi's "17 articles constitution" of 604. With its rich intercultural philosophical and political experience, Buddhism served well during the *ritsuryō* era to integrate local cults and strengthen ties between central and regional elites, even on an intellectual and spiritual level.

Buddhist temples had already been built occasionally in remote regions, but in 749, Emperor Shōmu (r. 724–749) ordered the implementation of a system of province temples (*kokubunji*), one for monks and another for nuns (*kokubunniji*) in every province. Tōdaiji, in the capital, was turned into the provincial temple for Yamato, and functioned as the spiritual center of the system. Monks were sent in rotation from the center to the provinces, in order to teach nuns and monks there and to initiate novices. The provincial temples and their staff were maintained and strictly controlled by the central administration, especially as a career in a temple promised a decent living without financial burdens.

Unlike the province temples central province shrines (known as *sōja, ichinomiya*, and other designations) were not institutionalized until the late eleventh century, an era noteworthy for increasing autonomy of the provinces and the emergence of the warrior class. Such shrines may be seen in a tradition of local cults as the spiritual nuclei of local autonomy in contrary to centralized Buddhism.[15]

Sites for provincial offices were selected on the basis of convenience for traffic. When rivers or the sea were nearby, landing places were installed for ships transporting heavy goods. Like the pearls of a necklace, all *kokufu* were connected to the capital by public highways called *ekiro* ("horse-stable roads"), organizing the regular transport of taxes, the exchange of information, and the travels of officers and statute workers. About every thirty *ri* (sixteen kilometers; a day's trip with heavy luggage) travel stations called "horse stables" (*umaya* or *eki*) were built with hostels for traveling officers and horses (up to twenty) for relay. At the landing places, boats were held ready. The main means of transport by land were statute workers and horses.[16]

From the late ninth century onward, groups of private horse-lenders (*shūba no tō*) began to play an important role in highway transport. Some of these groups are reported to have expanded their business activities to ambushing tax transports.[17] Personnel of the stations and some current expenses had to be paid by the rent from special rice fields (*ekiden* "station fields"). All other costs of traffic infrastructure such as streets, bridges, and stations had to be borne by the province administration.

Seven major highways connected all the provinces to the capital. All provinces adjacent to the same highway were considered part of one great region or circuit (*dō*).[18] Thus, the imperium was perceived as a well-arranged whole, aiming at a cultural and political center. The provinces were divided into four categories, based on the distance to the capital: "central-and-near," "middle," "far," and "peripheral." The latter, including Dewa and Mutsu in the northeast of Honshū, and the island provinces of Iki, Oki, and Tsushima in the far west, were simultaneously designated as border-strongholds (*hen'yō*).[19]

The ancient northeast was repeatedly shocked by severe conflicts and rebellions, in consequence of which provincial administration there was highly militarized. During the pre-*ritsuryō* and Nara eras, tribal groups, called *emishi*, lived in the northeast of both Dewa and Mutsu. They differed in language and culture from the dominating civilization of the archipelago, and may have been related in some way to the Ainu, who continued to live in Hokkaido, outside the Japanese imperium, into modern times. On the other hand, there was a considerable influx of people from the Kantō into this region.[20] The northeast and the western great region, Saikaidō, which included Kyushu and some smaller islands, and was overseen by a special supra-provincial office called the Dazaifu, enjoyed a relatively autonomous status within the imperium for long time.[21]

The provinces were divided into four categories ("big," "upper," "medium," and "small") according to their tax output. Thus, the distance of a province from the capital and its output category together with the data from *koseki* and *denzu* were the main parameters for planning the budget of the central state.

The goods transported as tax to the capital comprised manifold kinds, from raw materials to semi-finished or finished products. Tax goods were first delivered to special offices in the capital and then distributed to the various holders of ranks or offices and of institutions. Recipients of tax goods exchanged them at the two markets in the capital for whatever other goods they needed. On that score, the central administration can be conceptualized as a huge distribution apparatus responsible for providing the central elites with goods and services according to precise regulations by law.[22] Thus, the central elites realized a uniform rule over land and people. They were supported by local and regional elites, in exchange for which they accorded locals considerable autonomy, so that the system would function smoothly.

Diversifying center–province relations in the post-*ritsuryō* era

The *ritsuryō* state provisions for oversight of the lands and peoples in the provinces functioned more or less intact for more than two centuries, until the beginning of the tenth century, when periodic land allotments by the state were ended. After that, public lands—that is, taxable lands—were re-conceptualized and reclassified, and remained in the hands of their tillers. Nevertheless, the regular squares-and-strips-of-fields block pattern of arable land (the so-called *jōri*-system) inscribed for long stretches into the landscape remained until modern times, bearing witness to the endurance of the *ritsuryō* state and its successor systems.[23] The last new household registers, this fundamentally important tool undergirding *ritsuryō* rule, were drawn up at the beginning of the eleventh century.[24] But even thereafter, the central administration continued a stubborn—albeit not thoroughly consistent at all levels—struggle to maintain control over the land, and extreme concentration of power in the metropolitan center continued to determine the socio-economic system, allowing us to speak of a post-*ritsuryō* era.

Another line of continuity was drawn by the central administration's enduring financial support of the imperial household, of the court nobility, and of the central shrines and temples. These efforts served as the raison d'être connecting fiscal policy with the discourse of a "benevolent government" (*zensei*) as the ideological reverse of land control, and as the legitimation of imperial/court rule.

On the other hand, the first signs of antagonisms within the *ritsuryō* system appeared soon after its inception. The central administration's ongoing need to increase taxable land in order to cover the high costs of its policies, was one major source of trouble here.

The support of Buddhist institutions in the provinces and the center, compulsory from the eighth century onward, created a huge burden. Moving the capital from Heijō-kyō to Nagaoka-kyō in 784 and to Heian-kyō in 794, with the population in Heijō-kyō doubling from 100,000

to 200,000 in less than a century, posed another immense challenge for state finance. Expansion into the northeastern frontier was yet another: military campaigns, military settlements, and other infrastructure had to be financed, as did the transfer by force of large groups of *Emishi* into regions under the control of the central authorities. The northeast remained a largely autonomous region, full of internal and external conflicts with a strong autonomy and a continuous challenge to the center, until the late twelfth century.

Political solutions centered on strengthening the economic potential of agriculture. As early as in the formative stage of the *ritsuryō* system, measures were taken by state authorities in order to enlarge the area of paddy fields. As incentives to promote the exploitation of land, the central administration conceded tax reductions and more stable rights to the developers of new fields. One of the measures of this kind was encouraging non-state actors to exploit land and to install irrigation facilities. In a decree in 723, exploiters of arable land under certain conditions were guaranteed the use of this land for their lifetime; henceforth it was not to be subject to periodical redistribution. When new irrigation facilities were installed, the developer's household was to enjoy the use of the exploited land for even three generations (*san'sei isshin no hō*). Such incentives were extended in 743 when the three-generation limitation on the usufructury rights of the exploiter's family was abolished. In 765, however, the court reversed itself, interdicting any exploitation of arable land by non-state actors, except exploitation by Buddhist temples. Such oscillations of prohibiting and allowing non-state exploitation continued until at least the beginning of the tenth century; decrees allowing development of new fields, together with rights on arable land more stable than rights on land subject to redistribution or leased for rent issued in 772, 807, 879, and 931 were rescinded again in 784, 806, 812, 850, 896, and 902. All in all, we can discern the target of central land policy to have been keeping the land in the hands of tillers, as well as under the strict control of the administration. On the other hand, direct access of members of the central elites to the resources in the provinces had to be prevented, because some had already began exploiting land to the disadvantage of local farmers and in contradiction to the principle of common use of wasteland. Such developments could easily have threatened state tax income, and the government reacted sensitively when its direct control of the empire's resources, its raison d'être as a distributor of the wealth of the empire, was jeopardized.[25]

Land policies closely interacted with a long-term change in the tax system that began in the early ninth century. At the root of this change, we have to take into account a rapidly proceeding social differentiation within local society. In the face of a growing problem of tax evasion, the per capita tax system, levied on all males qualified as taxable in the household registers, was replaced by a system wherein subjects became liable for taxation (payment of goods and performance of statute labor) only by tilling taxable land. Real estate was more easily controlled than mobile men, and so the area and quality of the land tilled became the new basis for the assessment of services and goods. The system of household registers was abolished; the composition of households became irrelevant under the new tax system. We can suppose that the new social units of production were more-or-less nuclear farming family households, and that the former *kubunden* remained *mutatis mutandis* under the plough of the previous *handen*-tillers.[26] During the tenth century, all taxes in kind were integrated into a single category (*kanmotsu* or "official goods"), while all labor services were amalgamated as *zatsuyaku* or *zōeki* ("manifold services"). All taxable farming land—irrespective of origins—was registered under the category of *kōden* ("public fields").[27]

Together with the changes in the tax system, the central administration developed by trial and error new ways of providing central elites with goods and services. We can discern a process wherein the originally centralized collection and distribution of goods and labor services based on a direct and strict control over people and land divided into separate forms of control over the

two, leading finally to a strengthening of more direct and increasingly integrated control of both by central elites. This process was at the same time proceeding in interaction with an escalating social differentiation of these very central elites.[28]

As an example of first steps in this direction, in 879 approximately 4,000 *chō* of rice fields (including some newly cultivated areas) were designated as *kanden* ("office land"). These fields were not included among the *kubunden*, but were leased on yearly contracts to farmers at a rent of 20 percent of the yield, and tilled by corvée workers, or by paid labor. The crops were transferred by the provincial administration to the capital in order to provide income for civil servants in the central administration.[29]

As the system evolved, some institutions in the central administration and other central elites were vested with partial rights of income on specific rice fields. Typically, two parties held rights on such fields. One party, the great houses and institutions in the capital, held the rights to the labor taxes the tillers of these paddies had to pay, while taxes in kind were paid as before to the second party, the provincial administration. Fields of this type were called *zōeki menden*, that is, fields exempted (by the provincial administration) from labor levies. During the eleventh century, they developed into the so-called *zōekimen-kei shōen* ("*shōen* exempt from corvée") that became increasingly important for the support of Buddhist temples, quite soon after they finally came under the full direct control of the temple authorities.[30]

Shōen emerged as an important category of land and increased rapidly during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The new types of *shōen* were totally different from the early *shōen* established in the middle of the eighth century in order to support the reorganization of the Tōdaiji as the head of all province temples. The early versions lacked any autonomy from central administration and vanished again quite soon in the course of the ninth century.[31]

During the eleventh century, lands in the provinces became divided into two main categories. The first consisted of *shōen* of several types, controlled to a large extent by the noble houses and institutions that constituted the central elite. The second category, called *kokugaryō* ("land controlled by the provincial administration") or *kōryō* ("land under public control"), was land still under the control of the provincial government.[32]

From the tenth century onward, the central administration tried hard to control the number of *shōen*. In a famous decree promulgated in 902, it ordered strict "regulation of *shōen*," and followed this with about a dozen decrees of similar content from 984 till 1173.[33] This shows the care of the central administration for maintaining control over the land.

On the other hand, the efforts of the provincial administration to promote the development of arable land flagged noticeably in the early tenth century. One reason for this might have been the changing expectations central elites had for the provinces. In order to stabilize the oscillations of the court's yearly income, tax output for each province became fixed, with provincial governors held responsible for delivering stipulated quotas. The amount of the tax output now became the most important criterion for evaluating a governor's administration and determining his subsequent career. As an incentive, governors were granted the right to retain any surplus collected as their own income, but were also compelled to make up shortages out of their own pocket. Therefore, they subsequently lost interest in investing in infrastructure or other projects from which they drew no direct profit during their terms of office. In addition, the area of taxable land itself became increasingly fixed; newly opened land was not integrated into it, and did not promise a direct increase of tax output. Fallow land became a growing problem for local and regional society.

Of particular significance is the fact that province governors during this period of the tax system came to be called *zuryō* ("one [i.e., the new governor] who receives accounts [from the former governor]"). Typically, new governors brought followers and helpers with them from

the capital. Consequently, local officials, including district magistrates, village overseers, and the permanent functionaries in the provincial government (*zaichō kanjin*), fell behind. Provinces were turning into mere sources of income for members of the central elite, with governors remaining in the capital and sending proxies (*mokudai*) out to the province. As a result, governors were abdicating one of their core functions, their role in the promotion of agricultural activities, which had been the ethical basis justifying the rule of the centralized state. Local and regional elites stepped forward to take their place.[34]

From the middle of the ninth century, new economic elites came onto the stage of provincial society. In the documents, they appear as *fugō* ("rich powerful families") or *fugō rōnin* ("rich powerful families without a registered place of residence") in the cases of those active over larger geographic areas. These new figures accumulated movable wealth through usury, loaning seed rice to pauperized farmers at annual interest rates of 50 percent and more. They invested seed rice, agrarian equipment and facilities (often called *shitaku* – "private houses") for the exploitation of arable land and for bringing land lying fallow back under the plough. They had the necessary know-how in agriculture, as well as in organizing the paid labor of *furōnin*—tax evaders who had left their registered places of residence—and often took advantage of forced labor by farmers who had fallen into debt slavery.[35]

The *fugō* coordinated their activities closely with the district administration, which itself had long experience in the same fields of activity. Similar forms of entrepreneurship came into play in the emerging *shōen*, where the actors were known as *tato* ("[owner of] a rice field enclosure").[36] The new elites were profiting from the difficult position of the provincial administration, which needed to find a compromise between their interest in high tax yields from the land still under public control (*kōryō*) and the central elites' legitimate claim on stable revenue, which increasingly derived from *shōen* or similar land.

In combination, the foregoing developments reorganized the levy of taxes into a system of tax farming or revenue leasing. Governors determined the area of taxable rice land (*kōden* – "public rice fields"), dividing publicly administered fields into lots, which they allotted to regional and local elites. The latter, now designated as *fumyō* ("person burdened [with the duty of collecting taxes]"), were held responsible for ensuring that their assigned fields were kept under plough, and taxes were paid. In return, they were permitted to retain a portion of the crops as income. Newly reclaimed land was integrated into this system only as far as necessary in order to gain legal title to it.[37]

The structure of peasant farms was also changing. Farmers gained relatively stable possession of the fields they cultivated, but only as a matter of practice, and without legal title. The homesteads (*entakuchi*) on which farmers had enjoyed strong rights under the *ritsuryō* system now became subject to alienation for this very reason. Homesteads, including dry fields and even rice fields (those created from dry arable land) opened an approach to private control over arable land.[38]

An influx of central elites into the provinces transformed these social changes into a new trend. While, strictly speaking, provincial officials were not permitted to remain in their provinces of appointment beyond the end of their terms of office, holders of lower court ranks faced a reality in which their chances for a career at court were rapidly diminishing. Many, therefore, began pinning their hopes on an alternative life in the countryside. Some found new positions in the provinces, particularly in military service or in land reclamation projects similar to those being conducted by the *fugō*.

The immigrants maintained personal connections with court circles, and served as guardsmen in the imperial palace and in residences of the court nobility. At the same time, they put down roots in provincial society by means of their economic activities, by forming regional alliances, and by marrying daughters of provincial nobles of the *gunji* class or of lower-ranking permanent

provincial officers. Bearing prestigious surnames like Minamoto, Taira, or Fujiwara, they exploited their stature as men from the capital. They also served on behalf of the central administration as military leaders in wars in the northeast, recruiting their troops from among the regional elites, and paying them from their own funds. Thus emerged the nucleus of a new type of regional elite, the predecessors of the medieval warriors and local lords (*zaichi ryōshu*) who climbed on the stage later, in the eleventh century.[39]

In the background of all these developments, we have to suppose long-lasting social conflicts only exceptionally finding their way into the documents produced by and for central elites. For example, five conflicts over water rights are documented on the occasion of the establishment of the *shōen* in order to finance Tōdaiji (744–767). In this case, the opposing parties were the central administration, together with the provincial governors and Tōdaiji, on the one hand, and the heads of the district offices, together with representatives of the local elites, on the other. Only during a conflict in 761 were all the actors united in opposition to the temple. In a period of 250 years from the early ninth until the middle of the eleventh centuries, at least seventy-four large social conflicts appear in the documents, and the struggle for water rights was only one important factor. In most cases, as opponents we find the governors and other provincial officials on one side, and the district officials together with local dignitaries including some low-ranking officers of the provincial administration on the other. We can identify various sorts of conflicts, from nonviolent complaints against a governor (*ureijō*; thirty-two cases from 819 until 1052) to extremely violent incidents, such as assaults on the provincial government (twelve cases between 884 and 1023) or even assassinations of the governor (twelve cases between 857 and 1027). We also find vague reports of rebellions or upheavals (nine cases from 839 to 942). On the other hand, we find "letters of praise" (*zenjō*) for governors who had carried out outstanding benevolent rule, which we may interpret as expressions of a tense social situation.[40]

Some conflicts created a long-lasting sensation in the public discourse. The rebellion of Taira Masakado, a member of a central noble house that had settled in the provinces, is a prominent example.[41]

Masakado's grandfather, Prince Takamochi, was a great-grandson of Emperor Kanmu (r. 781–806) who had been pruned from the imperial family and given the family name Taira—a common practice for managing the size of the imperial family. His father was head of the Pacification Headquarters (*chinjufu*) in the northeast, and had settled in the Kantō after the termination of his military service. Typical of his class, Masakado served in the provincial military, and his economic base lay in agriculture and land exploitation, but even more in stud farming and stock breeding. In 935, he became embroiled in a quarrel with some of his relatives that spread into a conflict with the administrations of several provinces, and escalated into a rebellion reaching across the entire northern Kantō. In 940, he was killed by government troops under command of his relatives and peers—troops of the same type he was commanding himself.

Another type of social conflict that was less martial but that spotlights the dramatic situation in the provincial society lasted from 988 until 989. The governor, Fujiwara Motonaga, and his followers ransacked Owari province (today part of Aichi prefecture). The regional elites formed an alliance against Motonaga by taking him to court in the capital, with some success—at least for a couple of years.[42] These conflicts give us a rough idea of the forces behind institutional changes and underline the special interest regional elites deserve.

In the middle of the eleventh century, the tax system underwent another change. In the "Edict of Enkyū era for the Control of Shōen" (*Enkyū no shōen seiri rei*) issued in 1069, an "office of control over the registered *shōen*" (*kiroku shōen kenkei sho*) was established to coordinate central land policy. The tax base was concentrated in "public fields" (*kōden*) fixed by the provincial administration in registers (*ōtabumi*) together with the rate and kind of taxes. Some regional

variations were allowed according to the precedents of each province. Diminishing the latitude for action on the part of governors changed their role considerably, and an important cause of so many conflicts in the provinces vanished.[43]

Under the ensuing system, the provincial administration no longer dealt directly with the levy of taxes and service. Instead, the territory of each province was reorganized into units under a variety of titles that included traditional designations, such as *gun* or *gō*; as well as new ones, such as *bechimyō* or *betsumyō* ("separate *myō*"; deriving from the *fumyō* discussed above). Tax collection in these units was delegated to local and regional elites, who appear in the sources as *gunji* ("district officer"), *gōji* ("community officer"), or *myōshu* (holder of a *myō*).[44] Taxation evolved further into a system of tax farming or revenue leasing, as these officials over-collected taxes and pocketed the difference.

In addition to their role in the tax system, their leading role in the agriculture of the region, and their military skills, the new elites became the pillars of regional political association and socioeconomics. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, their stabilizing control over the tax units, in combination with their political and socioeconomic roles, amalgamated into a new form of more extensive, generalized rule over land called *shoryō* ("things controlled, holdings"), under figures dubbed *zaichi ryōshu* ("local lords") by historians. This rule included rights over land, as well as over the peasant farmers working and dwelling on it, with the latter bearing the duty to pay taxes or rents and perform services by reason of their residence. Sometimes even the farmers' homesteads were taxable as *zaike* ("rural houses").[45] The areas exploited by these local lords were no longer registered in the *ōtabumi* as taxable land, and the surplus from it became their income.[46]

The tax output of the provinces became less and less sufficient for the support of central elites. In place of tax-derived revenues, *shōen* were playing a growing role as sources of income. Establishing *shōen* long term required close cooperation among the beneficiary (family or institution), the central administration, provincial governors, and regional elites. Overcoming resistance from parts of the central government, the number of *shōen* increased significantly from the late eleventh century. *Shōen* gained strong autonomy from the provincial administration, reflecting regional characteristics and balances of power, and culminating in many cases in far-reaching exemptions from taxation (*fuyu*) and even immunity from entry (*funyū*) by provincial officials.[47]

The right to establish *shōen* was restricted to members of the central elite, called *shōen ryōke* by historians,[48] who installed administrational networks connecting their household offices in the capital with their *shōen* scattered all over the country. Rule over a *shōen* meant not only levying tax and labor from the inhabitants in order to supply the *ryōke* and his officers, but also exercising jurisdiction and the promotion of agriculture, fundamental elements of public order delegated to them by the central state, which became the most prominent aspects of the *ryōke*'s social and ethical role in the *shōen*.[49]

Land not integrated into *shōen*—on average just over half of the entire provincial territory—remained under control of the provincial government, as described above. Sometimes provinces were allotted as a whole to members of the central elites, following a system historians call *chigyōkoku* ("proprietary province," or "provinces under somebody's personal control") that granted the recipient the right to collect part of the province's tax output and to bestow posts in provincial administration on their followers. For members of the imperial house, a similar system called *bunkoku* or *in-bunkoku* ("distributed province"), under which court institutions—usually affiliated with a retired monarch, imperial lady or prince—received all tax revenues collected from the province, emerged in the eleventh century.[50] Structural similarities between *kōryō/kokugaryō* and *shōen* increased, and the so-called *shōen-kōryō* system emerged as the basis of power structure characteristic of the Middle Ages.

The increasing complexity of the balance of power in the capital and in the provinces offered the new regional elites opportunities for strengthening their position in multiple alliances with governors and the ruling higher authorities of a *shōen*. In order to reduce the influence of provincial administration, they sometimes commended title and partial income rights over their estates to higher-ranking figures—temples, top court nobles, and members of the imperial family—who used their power and influence to keep their rights legally recognized, protecting them from efforts by provincial governors to confiscate the lands and return them to the public rosters. At the other end of *shōen* administration, local elites were appointed as *shōen* officers. Such a change in legal form bore some risks, but in most cases the *zaichi ryōshu* were able to gain more stable and more profitable rights to their territories under the new conditions. The era of medieval decentralization and division of power had irrevocably begun.

Further reading, methods of research, and special subjects for discussion

History also has its history. Subjects, methods, and theoretical frames of reference are ever-changing, and lines of development become visible. In this respect, books on history become old, but not necessarily antiquated. Many studies are eventually superceded, yet continue to have long-lasting effects on later generations of historians.

Ishimoda Shō's landmark study of the classical state, *Nihon no kodai kokka*, is a case in point. The theories he introduced therein—citing the promotion of agriculture as one nucleus (alongside military functions) of the state's authority, and the role of local elites (especially the *gunji* class) as a decisive element in the acceptance and legitimation of court rule in the provinces—remain fundamental to current thinking on the subject. Both of these ideas were derived not simply from primary sources but rather as a result of theoretical work in close conjunction with analysis of documentary sources, particularly Karl Marx's theory of an Asiatic mode of production and Karl Wittfogel's theory of oriental despotism and hydraulic society.

Both Marx and Wittfogel stressed the role of hydraulic engineering in the early state-building process and the degree to which it retarded the development of individual possession of land. Nevertheless, the differences between various countries and regions to which these concepts can be applied—China and Japan, for example—remain a crucial topic for discussion.[51]

All of these theories have helped to formulate fruitful hypotheses concerning topics for which primary sources are, in most cases, fragmentary and insufficient. The debates through which historians like Ishimoda and Amino discussed their theories and formulated new ideas constitute a vital subject of research in and of themselves—and one that is in danger of being forgotten. Indeed, since the late 1980s, scholarship on premodern Japanese history has shown a marked decrease of interest in theoretical debate, and in the history of social change. Without critical discussions of theory, however, history devolves to little more than a collection of interesting stories.

As we have seen, much research on rural communities in classical times was inspired by such debates. New types of sources, methods of analysis, and approaches were developed. Middle- and late-twentieth-century urban spread, in conjunction with historical preservation laws that mandated archeological surveys of potentially valuable sites prior to construction, led to an explosion of new archeological data. And insights obtained through this new data in combination with those derived from historical geography and historical cartography helped to reconstruct hydraulic engineering, *jōri*-fields, and settlements in the classical epoch. Social anthropology, with its commitment to local and regional history (*chihōshi*), also assisted in developing new approaches, such as the integration of studies of local culture, social conflicts, and social movements.

Another question deserving special attention, because of its fundamental role in the analysis of historical terminology and concepts of comparative history, is how to find constructs and nomenclature through which to express the patterns of cooperation in a society so different from our modern, globalized, capitalist one. Social stratification, for example, seems to have been a ubiquitous phenomenon in classical Japan, yet one that was entirely different from modern notions of "social inequality." At least, that is the impression the sources convey. But these sources were produced mainly by ruling elites endowed with privileged access to human and material resources—the sources of their wealth and the very base of social inequality—and offer only the barest of direct insight into the lives of the people who had to place their labor, their mental abilities, and the products of their work at the disposal of the elites. I outlined these structures above, but we must not forget that this outline largely represents only the line of vision of the elites.

We do not know very much about the real cooperative relations, the self–perception, or the "agency" of members of groups not belonging to the elites. I presented some features above mainly under the label of "peoples' history" (*minshūshi*), but too often these depictions are negative, in the sense they show what people avoided (taxes, etc.) or what they did not do (services). New views of their activities within the system might be expected to emerge from research on material culture, with help of archeology or ethnology. One example of this potential can be seen in an excavation undertaken in the mountains of western Gunma prefecture, which revealed a village that was probably founded in the late tenth century by peasants trying to build new lives far away from the clutches of the *ritsuryō* bureaucracy.[52] But much more research remains to be conducted on that kind of people.

The same qualification also applies—perhaps even more—to the relationship of individuals or groups to the land, the most important resource in a premodern society dominated by agriculture. It is tricky stuff for modern observers—members of developed, capitalist societies with a clear idea of private property—to grasp landholding and land-exploitation within a society devoid of any such concept. We can be sure that every social group in classical society had its own view and its own notions of these relationships, and the vocabulary through which these various groups communicated—apart from the nomenclature of the ruling class—is an interesting question for exploration.

The task becomes even more complicated with respect to the era in which the *shōen* system developed. In addition to what I pointed out above, we may understand *shōen* also as a legal framework of respective "rights and duties" attached to various groups of central, regional, and local actors who were motivated in their actions by the aim of guaranteeing mutual advantage through each using his specific knowledge and labor force to make the *shōen* function.

The *shōen* system was, to be sure, established and developed initially in order to meet the needs of central elites, and it was organized hierarchically, in analogy to the familiar bureaucratic order. Nevertheless, it was more than a simple, top-down structure. It constituted a system of rights and duties known—particularly from the eleventh century onward—as *shiki*. This term, which originally meant "office" (a point that underscores its bureaucratic origins), cries out for deeper—and perhaps more theoretically minded—examination and discussion.[53]

In the classical era, the holding of *shiki* was restricted to central or regional elites—reflecting the "official" or "public" character of *shōen*. But during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a fundamental change occurred in the character of *shiki*, in parallel to a general trend toward deregulation and market-orientation of socioeconomic relations. Thenceforth, *shiki* came to designate the rights to income and administrative perquisites attached to titles within the *shōen* hierarchy. The official or public aspect of *shiki* was largely lost, eventually weakening former status restrictions, and a much broader range of social groups became holders of *shiki*. Thus, in the medieval era, *shiki* also played an important role in the process through which peasants gained

stable rights over the land they were tilling. It is highly interesting to discuss what role land in the hands of a majority of self-reliant peasants running their small-scale farms on their own account may have played, not only in socioeconomic structure but also in the mentality of the whole society.

Notes

1 Various economic, political, and cultural aspects of the relations between centers and regions during the ancient history of the Japanese archipelago are related in Joan R. Piggott, *Capital and Countryside in Japan, 300–1180: Japanese Historians in English*, giving an original presentation of the scholarship of fourteen Japanese historians on the epoch from state formation until to the end of Heian era, written by eight Japanese specialists, as interpreted by eight Western scholars. Mikael Adolphson, Edward Kamens, and Stacie Matsumoto, *Heian Japan, Centers and Peripheries*, a compilation of articles based on an international conference in 2002, represents an even wider range of themes on centers and peripheries in the Heian era. Further useful readings on our field in English language are presented in volumes 1 and 2 of *The Cambridge History of Japan*. Torao Toshiya, "Nara Economic and Social Institutions"; Cornelius J. Kiley, "Provincial Administration and Land Tenure in Early Heian," and Dana Morris, "Land and Society" are of special interest to our topic here. In the end, most research on our subject focuses on the economic institutions of central elites. See, for example, Bruce L. Batten, "Provincial Administration in Early Japan: From *Ritsuryō kokka* to *Ōchō kokka*." For readers of German, Detlev Taranczewski, "Der frühe Feudalismus" introduces our subject, and includes a list of basic references (most of them in English).

2 Yoshimura Takehiko, "Kodai shakai to doreisei" gives an overlook of the social stratification and explains the theoretical implications of research approaches. On the crucial function and the continuity of this local or regional chiefdom Ishimoda Shō's scholarship was pioneering and laid the fundaments of research until today (see, for example, *Nihon no kodai kokka*). Arguments for differentiating between ruling class and bureaucracy are discussed by Kotani Hiroyuki, *Rekishi no hōhō ni tsuite*, especially pp. 108–144.

3 The question of the extent to which premodern Japanese society can be perceived as agrarian, and especially what role wet rice culture played in it, has been much discussed in Japanese historiography, but no realistic alternative to an agrarian-centered view seems to be in sight. Much interesting criticism of this view has been developed by Amino Yoshihiko. For a lively discussion, see Amino Yoshihiko and Ishii Susumu, *Kome, hyakushō, tennō: Nihonshi no kyozō no yukue*.

4 The importance of slaves in classical Japanese society has been debated for a long time, in both factual and theoretical terms. As a result, we may conclude the overall quantitative and structural impact on society was not decisive. For a discussion of slavery, see Yoshimura Takehiko, "Kodai shakai to doreisei." One feature of these debates was a historical comparison between ancient societies in Europe and in Japan. Ishimoda Shō was among the most important advocates of the slavery argument. His "Kodai ni okeru dorei no ichi-kōsatsu: Sono shinka no katei ni tsuite" refers also to Karl August Wittfogel's theories on slavery in China ("the Orient") and in ancient Rome.

5 Kishi Toshio, *Nihon kodai sekichō no kenkyū* offers a comprehensive study of household registers.

6 Tax system is a crucial and nonetheless intricate matter in the research of *ritsuryō* state. A classic introductory reading is Hayakawa Shōhachi, *Ritsuryō kokka*, especially pp. 433–447. Also very useful is Sakaehara Towao, "Ritsuryō kokka no keizai kōzō." Takei Naoko's recent "Ritsuryō zaisei to kōnōsei" offers another fine introduction. For a comprehensive presentation in English, see Batten, "Provincial Administration in Early Japan."

7 In the classical and medieval periods, the homesteads of free people were respected, even by state authorities, as a kind of sacrosanct space. Toda Yoshimi, *Nihon ryōshusei seiritsu shi no kenkyū*, cites this as one product of the establishment of individual rights over lands. Matsumoto Keiji, "Kodai shūraku to zaichi shakai," presents concrete insight into the spatial aspects of homesteads and settlements.

8 For an archaeological approach to the question what kind of settlements and rural communities, and what developments, may be discovered beneath the surface of legal and bureaucratic regulations, see Hirose Kazuo, "Kōkogaku kara mita kodai no shūraku." For a discussion of rural social inequality and chieftainship (*zaichi shuchō*), and their integration into the ruling system, see Yoshida Akira, *Nihon kodai sonraku shi josetsu*.

9 There is rich accumulation of research on *gunji* and the classical local or regional political structure. Ishimoda, "Kodai ni okeru dorei"; Hirose, "Kōkogaku"; Niino Naoyoshi, *Nihon kodai chihō seido no*

kenkyū; Isogai Masayoshi, *Gunji oyobi uneme seido no kenkyū*; Nagayama Yasutaka, "Kokka to gōzoku"; Yamaguchi Hideo, "Chiiki shakai to kokugun sei"; and Kanegae Hiroyuki, "Gunji to kodai sonraku" are useful introductory readings. Niino Naoyoshi, *Kenkyūshi: Kuni no miyatsuko*, 214–240 summarizes the discussion about continuities between the politically centralizing, pre-*ritsuryō* system of *kuni no miyatsuko* and *gunji*.

10 Kinoshita Ryō, *Kokufu: Sono hensen o shu nishite* gives a comprehensive introductory description of provincial offices and their changing functions during the *ritsuryō* and *ōchō* eras, with a strong focus on archaeology. See also Yoshimura Shigeki, *Kokushi seido*. Studies of *gunji* include Yamanaka Toshiji, "Kokuga, gunga no kōzō to hensen," and Satō Makoto, "Kyūto, kokufu, gunga."

11 For the history of ancient irrigation, a crucial task of the classical state and society, see Kameda Takashi, *Nihon kodai yōsui shi no kenkyū* and Kinoshita Seiichi, *Kodai Nihon no kasen kangai*. For examples in various regions and discussion of theoretical implications, and especially for the eighth century, see Charlotte von Verschuer, "Water Management in Japan in the 8th Century."

12 On this point see note 40, below.

13 On the military role of provincial authorities under the *ritsuryō* system until the ninth century, see Yoshinaga Masafumi, "Kodai kokka no gunji soshiki to sono henshitsu." For the *ōchō* and *insei* eras, see Shimomukai Tatsuhiko, "Kokuga to bushi"; and Ishii Susumu's classic study, *Kamakura bushi no jitsuzō: Kassen to kurashi no okite* (especially pp. 2–57). For studies in English, see Karl Friday, "Teeth and Claws: Provincial Warriors and the Heian Court"; and *Hired Swords: The Rise of Private Warrior Power in Early Japan*. Court ladies of provincial origin are discussed in Isogai Masayoshi, *Gunji oyobi uneme*.

14 See Kinoshita Ryō, *Kokufu*.

15 How the political and cultural roles of Buddhism and *kami*-cult (the term *Shintō* has many anachronistic connotations and should be used with caution when applied to the classical era; for more on this point, see Chapter 12 of this volume) may have differed and how interrelations between the two functioned during the various epochs in the relations between center and peripheries remains an interesting question not yet sufficiently discussed. On Buddhism and *kami* cults in the provinces, see Kinoshita Ryō, *Kokufu* and Suzuki Keiji, "Ritsuryō kokka to jingi·bukkyō." For further developments, especially the amalgamation of Buddhism and *kami*-cults in the provinces, see Kawane Yoshiyasu, *Chūsei hōken shakai no shuto to nōson*, 1–42.

16 Traffic and circulation of goods are discussed by Hotate Michihisa, Janet Goodwin, and Gustav Heldt, in "Traffic between Capital and Countryside in Ritsuryō Japan"; and by Kinoshita Ryō in *Kokufu* and "Kodai no kōtsū taikei." Wooden tablets (*mokkan*) used as a kind of declaration document for tax goods are a very useful source for economic history, especially when analyzed in combination with the documents of the central administration. Research on *mokkan* is introduced by Joan R. Piggott, "Mokkan: Wooden Documents from the Nara Period."

17 On ancient horse breeding and connected social and economic matters see Yamaguchi Hideo, "8–9 seiki no maki ni tsuite"; Toda Yoshimi, *Nihon ryōshusei*, 280–316, and *Nihon chūsei no minshū to ryōshu*, 47–57; Ishii Susumu, *Chūsei bushidan* (especially pp. 138–149); Fukuda Toyohiko, *Taira no Masakado no ran*, *passim*; and Karl Friday, *The First Samurai: The Life and Legend of the Warrior Rebel Taira Masakado*. On *shūba no tō* see Endō Motoo, "Shūba no tō no kōdō to seikaku."

18 Takeda Sachiko, "Roads in the *Tennō*-centered Polity," discusses Takeda Sachiko's comprehensive studies on the classical transportation system.

19 The concept of peripheries is crucial for the understanding of the classical polity in Japan as well as in the Sino-centered regional order—cf. Takahashi Tomio, *Henkyō: mō hitotsu no Nihonshi* and "The Classical Polity and its Frontier." Introductions to this order and how it influenced the relations between the center and peripheries in the frame of the Japanese archipelago can be found in Ōmachi Ken, "Higashi-Ajia no naka no Nihon ritsuryō kokka"; Ishigami Eiichi, *Kodai kokka to taigai kankei*, especially 270–277; and Kumata Ryōsuke, "Kodai kokka to ebisu·hayato."

20 For conflicts between *Emishi* especially and early *ritsuryō* state cf. Kumata Ryōsuke, "Kodai kokka"; and Karl Friday, "Pushing beyond the Pale: The Yamato Conquest of the Emishi and Northern Japan."

21 Kurazumi Yasuhiko, *Dazaifu* provides an introduction to the Dazaifu.

22 Hayakawa Shōhachi's classic *Ritsuryō kokka* (especially pp. 433–447) offers a useful outline of the classical tax system. More details on its development and theoretical aspects are provided by Kushiki Yoshinori, "Seisan·ryūtsū to kodai no shakai hensei."

23 The study of the historical landscape forms an important field of research situated between archaeology, historical geography, and historical science mainly based on written documents. Such studies permit us insights into aspects of history—from the organization of everyday life and production to spatial factors

or long-term socioeconomic developments—that are missing from, or only very fragmentarily reflected in, written documents. The agrarian historian Furushima Toshio is a pioneer in this field; see *Tochi ni kizamareta rekishi*. Asaka Katsusuke et al., *Rekishi ga tsukutta keikan* surveys a geographically broader scope. The changes to landscapes in historical eras are traced by the historical geographer Ono Tadahiro, in *Nihon kōko chirigaku* (especially pp. 113–158) and by the environmental archaeologist Yasuda Yoshinori, in *Kankō kōkogaku koto-hajime* (on paddy field agriculture, see especially pp. 181–220). Kinda Akihiro and his study group impart precious insights on the *jōri* system; see *Jōri to sonraku no rekishi chirigaku kenkyū* and *A Landscape History of Japan*. See also Jōrisei·kodai toshi kenkyūkai, *Kodai no toshi to jōri*. An overview of data about the land allotments appears in Miyamoto Sukuu, "Ritsuryōsei-teki tochi seido." For all aspects of systematical research in historical geography we have Arizono Shōichirō et al.'s very useful handbook, *Rekishi chiri chōsa handobukku*.

24 See Hayakawa Shōhachi, *Ritsuryō kokka*, 33.

25 In particular, the decrees of 723 and 743 were from time to time perceived like a dawn of private property system on the archipelago. But "private" as well as "property" are notions with strong connotations for our modern capitalist society, and we have to take care not to fall into anachronism. Overall, a majority of scholars agree that control of the fundamental means of production in the agrarian society of the archipelago—land and water—by central administration by no means showed a tendency to ease up during the era in question. The characteristics of land policy during the era are discussed in Hayakawa Shōhachi, *Ritsuryō kokka* (see especially pp. 288–291); Oguchi Masashi, "Kodai 1," 35–48; and, in a broader social context, in Yoshida Takashi, *Ritsuryō kokka to kodai no shakai*. Another point worthy of discussion in this context is the problem of so-called state-ownership of land or territory. Takahashi Kazuki, "Shōensei to toshi·sonraku," for example, uses this construct to describe *ritsuryō* land regulations (polemizing against the concept of private landed property), while Kotani Hiroyuki, *Rekishi no hōhō*, contends that the notion of state ownership is misleading, in that common property rights over land were held by the ruling elite as a whole, with the state and its bureaucracy merely acting in a managerial capacity.

26 For the problem of continuities in agrarian land use see Murai Yasuhiko, *Kodai kokka kaitai katei no kenkyū*, especially pp. 339–342.

27 Classic, and still fundamental, studies of the changing tax system (and the relations people of various social layers held to the land being transformed together with the tax system) include Murai Yasuhiko, *Kodai kokka*, which outlines future research, and Sakamoto Shōzō, *Nihon ōchō kokka taisei ron*, which laid the basis for research on the *ōchō* state's fiscal system. Sakamoto gives also a comprehensive introduction to the post-*ritsuryō* era in *Sekkan jidai*.

28 An overview of this process appears in Detlev Taranczewski, "Einige Aspekte der Entstehung des privaten Grundeigentums im mittelalterlichen Japan."

29 Murai Yasuhiko, *Kodai kokka*, 129–145 researched these so-called Gangyō *kanden* (public fields established during the Gangyō era [877–885]).

30 Murai Yasuhiko's classic *Kodai kokka*, 351–372 offers a clear and useful description of *zōeki-/zōyakumenkei shōen*.

31 A useful and vivid introduction into the history of *shōen* appears in Kudō Keiichi, *Shōen no hitobito*; for an abridged English version, see "Shōen."

32 The studies of Amino Yoshihiko, *Nihon chūsei tochi seido shi no kenkyū* are still the most comprehensive introduction into the field of *shōen* and *kōryō/kokugaryō*, notwithstanding the recent critique of the *shōen–kōryō–sei* approach raised by Takahashi Kazuki, "'Shōen kōryō sei' kara 'chūsei shōensei' e"; *Chūsei shōen sei to Kamakura bakufu*, especially pp. 3–36; and "Shōensei."

33 For a systematic understanding of *shōen seiri rei*, the classic studies by Sakamoto Shōzō (*Sekkan jidai*, 321–350) and Murai Yasuhiko (*Kodai kokka*, 224–236) are still highly recommended.

34 *Zuryō* is a phenomenon fundamentally important for explanation of the changes in power relations and revenue system of the post-*ritsuryō* society. For the former, see Morita Tei, *Zuryō*; for the latter, Sakamoto Shōzō, *Nihon ōchō kokka*, and Katsuyama Seiji, "Shūshu taikei no tenkan" are useful introductions. Concerning the problems of agriculture and irrigation Hōgetsu Keigo, *Chūsei kangaishi no kenkyū* and Toda Yoshimi, *Nihon ryōshusei* are essential essays. Okuno Nakahiko, "Kodai-teki kannō yori chūsei-teki kannō e no tenkai" gives an overall view of agricultural policy in the center and its realization in the peripheries. Insights into the relations between capital and provinces in the post-*ritsuryō* era can be found in Furuse Natsuko, "Sekkan seiji," especially pp. 107–156, and Terauchi Hiroshi, "Kizoku seiken to chihō shihai."

35 On *fugō* and *rōnin* see Toda Yoshimi, *Nihon ryōshusei*, especially pp. 14–113. Okamoto Kenji, *Furō to tōzoku* discusses aspects of *furō*-mobility and social deviance in the eighth and ninth centuries.

36 On the *shōen–tato–gunji* complex, see Toda Yoshimi, *Nihon ryōshusei*, 116–165.
37 A comprehensive discussion of the *fumyō* system appears in Toda Yoshimi, *Nihon ryōshusei*, 242–277.
38 The role of the homestead (*entaku, entakuchi, yashiki*) as one of the decisive factors, or the core, for the formation of medieval *shoryō* and local *ryōshu* as a new system of rule over land and people was examined systematically by Toda Yoshimi, *Nihon ryōshusei*, 74–113. Later his theories were referred to as "*taku no ronri* [the logic of the house]" in the academic discourse, e.g., by Ishii Susumu, *Chūsei bushidan*, 113–149, or in Detlev Taranczewski, *Lokale Grundherrschaft und Ackerbau in der Kamakura-Zeit – dargestellt anhand des Nitta no shō in der Provinz Kōzuke Study of Nitta no Shō in Kōzuke Province*, especially pp. 172–206, a case study on Nitta no shō. The question of whether this discourse was influenced by discussions among European medievalists would be worthy of research.
39 On the concept and socioeconomic structure of *zaichi ryōshu* ("local lord") and the related concept of *shōen ryōshu* ("lord of a *shōen*"), Toda's scholarship is still an indispensable reading (see *Nihon ryōshusei*, especially pp. 192–240). Detlev Taranczewski, "Some Aspects of Local Rule in Medieval Japan" may also be useful. On immigrants of middle and lower court nobility origin in general, see Aoki Kazuo, *Kodai gōzoku*. The history of the Kantō offers many examples of biographies of this kind. Case studies on the northern Kantō include Minegishi Sumio, "Tōgoku bushi no kiban, Kōzuke no kuni Nitta no shō"; Friday, *The First Samurai;* and Taranczewski, *Lokale Grundherrschaft*.
40 Social conflicts can be observed in various dimensions and social layers, from with contradictions of different social roles played by one person to clashes between large numbers of people. We can look on the history of social conflicts from two perspectives: On the one hand, as special approach to historical research, and on the other hand, as part of a current of historical political discourse. As a rule, the latter serves as an igniting spark to the former, but it takes some time until such discourse finds expression in historical research. The basic assumption of such an approach is that a feasible method to explain the developmental dynamism of societies lies in analyzing its conflicts. Classic authors representing this approach in the early twentieth century include the sociologists Georg Simmel and Max Weber. After World War II, research on social conflict—in recent as well as in historical societies—flourished not only in Japan, but also in the USA and in Europe—the 1960s and the 1970s were a Golden Age for that topic. Authorities in this field include the political sociologists Lewis A. Coser and Ralf Dahrendorf, who played important roles in the transnational intellectual discourse on social conflict. Their work is still a useful introductory reading for the theoretical and methodological framework, even for students of Japanese history. All these authors have been translated into Japanese and had a long-lasting effect on research and on scientific terminology in Japan. It would be a valuable research project in its own right to analyze the circumstances under which discourses of social conflict unfolded, and to examine the interactions of social change, discourses, and historical research. Two other forerunners of historical research on the topic, Karl Marx and the congenial Friedrich Engels, traditionally played an exceptional role in the study of historical social conflict in Japan. Subjects like "the history of class struggles" (*kaikyū tōsō shi*) or "people's history" (*minshūshi*) represented important fields of research. "People's history" forms a particularly important field of historiography. The eleven volumes of Kadowaki Teiji et al., *Nihon minshū no rekishi* are a vivid introduction to research in this field from ancient times to the present. Especially relevant to our discussion are the first two volumes (Kadowaki Teiji and Amakasu Ken, *Minshū shi no kigen;* and Inagaki Yasuhiko and Toda Yoshimi, *Doikki to nairan*). Sakamoto Shōzō, *Nihon ōchō kokka*, 197–222; *Sekkan jidai*, 290–320; and Abe Takeshi, *Sekkan seiji*, 153–219 offer introductions with stress on the political and financial aspects of the provinces. An overview of water conflicts with some theoretical reflections on social conflict appears in Detlev Taranczewski, "Streit um Wasser: Konflikt und Kooperation in der japanischen Reisbauerngesellschaft operation in Japanese Rice-Cultivating Society."
41 For a comprehensive study on Masakado in English language with a critical review of the related historiography see Friday, *The First Samurai*. For *Shōmonki*, the literary account of Masakado's rebellion, we have Judith N. Rabinovitch, *Shomonki: The Story of Masakado's Rebellion*. For a general account of the topic in Japanese, see Fukuda Toyohiko, *Taira no Masakado no ran*. For a broader framework of social conflicts or movements including the rebellion of Fujiwara Sumitomo around the Inland Sea at the same time, Hayashi Rokurō, *Kodai makki no hanran*: *sōzoku to kaizoku* is a useful introduction.
42 For the Owari conflict see Abe Takeshi, *Owari no kuni gebumi no kenkyū*; Abe Takeshi, *Sekkan seiji*, 153–219; Abe Takeshi, *Owari no kuni gebumi chūkai*; and Verschuer, Charlotte von, "Life of Commoners in the Provinces: The Owari no gebumi of 988" and "Water Management in Japan in the 8th Century."
43 In the background of these decrees, we can suppose fierce conflicts among the central elites, and between them and the formal *ritsuryō* bureaucracy for access to economic resources. One of the fundamental

functions of the *kirokusho* was the regulation of such disputes between holders of rights on *shōen*. Kawabata Shin, *Shōensei seiritsushi no kenkyū*, 367–423 gives an overview of the administration of justice within *kuge* class. A good indicator of the escalating contradictions between members of the elites may be discerned in the increasing number of institutions of jurisdiction, *kirokusho* being one of it. The main subject of litigation was rights to income from *shōen* or similar institutions. Classic studies on the changes in land system include Inagaki Yasuhiko, "Ritsuryōsei-teki tochi seido no kaitai"; Amino Yoshihiko, *Nihon chūsei tochi seido*; and Murai Yasuhiko, *Kodai kokka*, 373–396. A more recent overview can be found in Gomi Fumihiko et al., *Chūsei zenki no tochi shoyū*, 124–130. For changes in tax system, Katsuyama Seiji, *Chūsei nengusei seiritsushi no kenkyū*, 171–222, is especially useful.

44 Sakamoto Shōzō, *Nihon ōchō kokka*, 241–336 conducted a systematic study of these new institutions, showing their characteristics as officials and as tax farmers. On this point, see also Toda Yoshimi, *Nihon ryōshusei*, 241–277.

45 *Zaike* is a phenomenon crucial to understanding the transition from classical to medieval society. It is, however, a good example of how difficult it is to detect the social and economic conditions of productive labor forces often hidden under the institutional superstructure, which was built up primarily in order to meet the revenue interests of state and central elites. Investigations are difficult not only because of this special character of institutions like *zaike*, but also for reasons of the relatively small quantity of relevant sources extant from the era we are treating here. Toda Yoshimi, *Nihon ryōshusei*, 241–277, advanced the discussion considerably, revealing the socioeconomic reality behind the institutional curtain. Until the 1960s *zaike* were sometimes discussed as if they represented relics of ancient slavery, unable to establish even de facto rights of usufruct over the land the occupants of *zaike* were tilling. One of the most prominent discussants supporting a slave-origin hypothesis concerning *zaike* (which was based on the assumption that a slave-owning society existed in classical Japan) was Nagahara Keiji, *Nihon hōkensei seiritsu katei no kenkyū*, 151–180 and 222–283). For this discussion and for an overview of formation and structure of *zaike*, especially their connection with paddies and dry fields, see also Taranczewski, *Lokale Grundherrschaft*, 97–151. For a discussion on slavery see also Amino Yoshihiko and Ishii Susumu, *Kome*.

46 For a comprehensive analysis of this phenomenon, see Taranczewski, *Lokale Grundherrschaft*, especially pp. 61–64. On *ōtabumi*, see Ishii Susumu, *Nihon chūsei kokkashi no kenkyū*, 118–178.

47 Kudō Keiichi's 1975 article, "Shōensei no tenkai," already stressed the importance of central authorities in the process of establishing *shōen*. This line has been further developed in recent studies on *shōen* system, including Kawabata, *Shōensei seiritsushi no kenkyū* and Takahashi Kazuki, *Chūsei shōen sei*. There is a strong trend in Western and in Japanese historical research to view *shōen* as a form of private property, something akin to a foreshadowing of modern capitalist society. Voices criticizing this opinion have increased since the late 1950s. Takahashi Kazuki is one recent representative of this viewpoint. Satō Yasuhiro, "Shōensei to tohi kōtsū" elaborates on the relations between *shōen* and the capital.

48 "Estate proprietor" is one of the translations used for this Japanese term by Western researchers. On the problems of a historical terminology proper for expressing the premodern structures of a social relation we often describe by terms derived from our modern conditions see the concluding section of this chapter and note 47.

49 The most common English translation for "*shōen ryōke*" is "estate proprietor." But this expression introduces problematically modern and capitalistic nuances, and for that reason, I prefer to avoid it. For more on issue of translation of terminology, see the concluding section of this chapter. Takahashi Kazuki, "Shōensei" points out that the competences *shōen ryōke* were holding were public, and derived from the competences of provincial governors.

50 For *chigyōkoku*, see Murai Yasuhiko, *Kodai kokka*, 337–349; and Takahashi Kazuki, *Chūsei shōen sei*, 39–75. A useful summary of the *chigyōkoku* and *bunkoku* systems, and the differences between them, appears in Morita Tei, *Zuryō*, 178–183.

51 In addition to Ishimoda's classic studies on "Asiatic Mode of Production" or "Oriental Despotism" we have—among others—the work of Karl August Wittfogel (*Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, Versuch der Analyse einer großen asiatischen Agrargesellchaft* and *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*), Hara Hidesaburō ("Ajiateki seisan yōshiki hihan josetsu, 'shokeitai' no rikai ni motozuku kisoteki shogainen no saikentō"), Shiozawa Kimio (*Ajiateki seisan yōshiki ron*), and Adachi Keiji, *Sensei kokka shi ron*: *Chūgoku shi kara sekai shie*. For the original texts see Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*; Teshima Masaki, *Shihonshugiteki seisan ni senkōsuru shokeitai*; Iida Kan'ichi, "Shihonsei seisan'yōshiki ni senkōsuru shokeitai"; and Iida Kan'ichi and Okamoto Saburō, "Atarashiku happyōsareta Marukusu no sōkō ni tsuite."

52 See Ichimura Katsumi and Yamamoto Kiyoshi, *Kuni-mura izeki. Yamazumi shūraku no tankyū mura archeological site. An investigation into a mountain dwelling village*.

53 On *shiki* (and the problem of "property"), see Nakata Kaoru's classic study, *Hōsei-shi ronshū*, vol. II, part III, 70–295. Nakata's work was deeply influenced by discussions on the conceptual effects of the reception of Roman law in German legal history that took place in the late nineteeth and early twentieth centuries, and which itself had long-lasting effects on later discussion of the *shōen* system. For readers of German, Hans-Rudolf Hagemann, "Eigentum," and Dieter Schwab, "Eigentum," are useful references. In French, Marc Bloch's great classic, *Seigneurie française et manoir anglais* remains a precious and fructiferous exposition. For Japanese theoretical discussions, see Shibahara Takuji, *Shoyū to seisan yōshiki no rekishi riron*.

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9
Court and countryside 1200–1600
The articulation of local autonomy

Peter D. Shapinsky

Japan's medieval period witnessed considerable appropriation of political and economic power by local actors, especially warriors, at the expense of political centers. Debates over the dynamics that generated this autonomy have long occupied the heart of medieval studies of Japan. These debates connect constructs that are central not only to views of the medieval period, but to modern Japanese national identity as well. Key among them are the issues of warrior lordship, transformations of estates into villages, horizontal and hierarchical institutions, and commercialization.

This chapter discusses these constructs through a lens of center and periphery in order to demonstrate both the historical transformations and to highlight the ways in which studies of local autonomy have enabled scholars to re-envision the history of Japan and its connections with the rest of the world.

Territory

Under the system that emerged during Japan's late classical era, authority remained thoroughly centralized, and administrative rights over lands and peoples in the provinces were grounded in centrally sanctioned titles, known as *shiki*.[1] By the medieval period, much of Japan's population had some connection to *shiki*. Titles differentiated by status, attached to particular posts responsible for carrying out specific functions, and promised rights to income from land and sea territories designated as either private estates (*shōen*) or public lands (*kokugaryō*) administered on behalf of absentee religious and aristocratic proprietors in Kyoto. The office and estate apparatuses built flexibility into medieval Japanese systems of property and tenure. *Shiki* could be divided, sold, or inherited; management could evolve without sacrificing the integrity of the corporate relationships. Nevertheless, we may also heed Thomas Keirstead, who argued that structures like *shiki* derived power from the shared realm of understanding generated through the administration and habitation of estates.[2]

The persistence and transformations of *shiki* and estates inspire considerable debate over the demise of the estate and the emergence of local autonomy.[3] For Marxists, such as Nagahara Keiji, the institutionalization of warrior vassalage under the Kamakura regime signaled the beginning of the end of the estate system, which then met its demise in the "feudal-style" land ownership of

the Muromachi period. Nishitani Mashahiro points out that by the Kamakura period, the connections between estates and their proprietors in the capital had attenuated. Proprietors sought agents who would loyally support their own priorities, while warriors and other on-site estate managers sought to cement control over local territories. Late Kamakura judicial decisions resolved these and other conflicts by transforming many estates into single proprietorships (*ichien*).[4]

Other historians identify as pivotal the Muromachi period, which witnessed an increase in the recourse to violence, the growth of warrior lordship, and commercialization. Warrior lords expanded their direct control over estates and public lands as the imperial court surrendered its powers of adjudication of land rights to the shogunate. Although they sometimes retained influence as patrons, and remained powerful in the capital region, traditional proprietors gradually ceased to play an active role in the provinces, and warriors appropriated extractive, judicial, and police powers.[5]

Muromachi-period estate administration reflected intensified commercialization; *shiki* became less tied to inheritance or status and more commoditized. Proprietors auctioned off managerial offices to entrepreneurial experts such as monks, local warriors, financiers, powerful villagers, and pirates, who tied estates to markets, toll barriers, and commercial trade in order to turn a profit. Studies of this commercialization have debunked older models of estates as hermetically sealed, institutional hierarchies. Estates were integrated into subsistence exchange networks; periodic markets developed by the Kamakura period, and commercial exchange enabled estate residents to pay rents in cash or bills of exchange instead of kind.[6]

Conceptual changes that accompanied the breakdown in central authority in the fifteenth and sixteenth century are another common thread among historians. Keirstead and others suggest that the estate as a system ended sometime in the fifteenth or sixteenth century, as specific titles within estates acquired new significations tied to lordship and dominion by local elites.

By the Ōnin War (1467–1477), villages replaced estates as loci of identity; the term *hyakushō* (which originally signified persons without court rank—that is all persons liable for taxes) tied commoners to villages instead of proprietors. "*Ryōshu*" a term originally applied to estate proprietors, now came to indicate instead the unitary power of a single military lord. For Fujiki Hisashi and Mary Elizabeth Berry, the ubiquity of conflict in post-Ōnin War society legitimized a culture of "self-redress" (*jiriki*) wherein multiple tiers of society turned to violence, instead of the judicial apparatuses of the court and shogunate, for the resolution of disputes.[7]

Yet another school of thought pushes the end of the estate system to the late sixteenth century, when Toyotomi Hideyoshi's land surveys swept away previous landholding arrangements and identified a single owner for each territory. Nevertheless, although estate terminology survived in the sixteenth century, it did so in no standardized way, mixing interchangeably with words such as "village."[8]

Warriors

Warriors, whether defined as landowners, specialists in military arts, or as loci of patronage relationships connecting capital to countryside, remain a central focus of studies of local autonomy. Warrior identity remained fluid and open until the early modern unification, with villagers, shrine workers, pirates, and others all claiming the mantle of samurai ("we who serve") as a marker of status. As warfare became endemic and violence a way of life, "samurai" became conceptually tied to violence, but the term did not become equated with a "warrior class" until the early modern period.[9]

In contrast to an earlier tendency to focus on warriors as individuals, today, warriors are understood in terms of groups: as war bands and corporate families with ties to territory. Jeffrey Mass saw the Kamakura period as marking the beginning of medieval warrior society through the proliferation of new warrior-family surnames derived from the local place name of a homeland—contrasting with the Heian era, when warriors more commonly self-identified using central noble names (such as Taira, Minamoto, or Fujiwara).[10]

Historians have long accepted the idea that warriors took on military service as a family obligation, which enabled some warrior kin groups to become centers of political, economic, and cultural power. Recognition by others that one bore a surname became, in the medieval period, a sign of samurai house identity, a symbol of status, obligations owed to the state, and honors accruing to the family. "Family" in this context may be broadly interpreted as a unit of descent consisting of a male–female bond, children, and connected bloodlines, focused on the transgenerational transfer of property. Scholars define such groups in an expansive context as "clans" or "leagues" (*ichimon*), or more narrowly as "family" or "houses" (*ie*). Belief in a common ancestral deity (*ujigami*) or oaths of common cause (*ikki keiyaku*) strengthened ties. Historians also tend to agree that family allegiance did not necessarily determine political allegiance. For much of the medieval period, members of extended kin groups would align themselves with competing factions in order to ensure survival of at least part of the group. Wet nurse–child bonds also had considerable potential for challenging kin relations.[11]

In the late thirteenth century, inheritance patterns began to shift from partible distributions to devisal of assets to a single male heir (*sōryō*), who became responsible for all family obligations and privileges. One effect of both partible inheritance practices early in the Kamakura period and the unitary inheritance practices emerging by the late thirteenth century was considerable friction among siblings, who might either contest the main heir's claims or leave to form branch families (*shoshi*). Authorities and kin groups alike saw considerable value in the perpetuation of corporate family groups, empowering adoption as a potent tool of succession.[12]

Warrior lordship under the Kamakura shogunate

To emphasize the importance of its warrior retainers, and to ensure access to manpower and provisions, Kamakura designated those warrior families who elected to follow the regime's founder, Minamoto Yoritomo, as *gokenin* ("honorable housemen").[13] *Gokenin* hereditarily performed an array of services for the shogunate and used their status to justify claims to territory. Other warriors could hold most sorts of estate titles, but only *gokenin* could be appointed to one or both of two positions controlled by the shogunate: *shugo* ("provincial constables" or "military governors") and *jitō* ("land stewards"), located on public lands and private estates. Appointees often designated relatives or agents to actually reside in the provinces as deputies. While *gokenin* were once seen exclusively as Kamakura vassals, more recent studies highlight the degree to which tax collecting and guard duty brought warriors into cooperative relationships with other proprietors.[14]

Kamakura appointed one *shugo* to each province across Japan. *Shugo* appointees were typically warriors with homelands in eastern Japan. Their responsibilities included peacekeeping, organizing and overseeing the housemen of the province, and carrying out law enforcement functions, particularly in cases of violent crimes—like piracy or mountain banditry—that spilled across territorial borders. *Shugo* often attempted to use their peacekeeping functions in order to expand their influence, and sought to control strategic positions in provinces either directly or through incorporation of *jitō* into their personal vassal bands. Among such strategic sites were entrepôts linking domestic and foreign trade routes. The shogunate restrained *shugo* by enforcing the immunity of estates from outside interference (*funyūken*), and other measures.[15]

Provincial constables existed in tandem with imperially appointed provincial governors through the reign of Emperor Go-Daigo (r. 1318–1339). Regional trends are visible: Kamakura *shugo* displaced provincial governors in the east, whereas in central and western Japan, the civil governorships remained stronger. Nevertheless, detailed examinations of Kamakura-era land-holding practices also reveal considerable intermixing between shogunate and court spheres of interest, with members of the court continuing to own land in the Kantō for instance, and families serving concurrently in both warrior and civil administrations.[16]

Civil provincial governors' offices also generated local lordship. Local functionaries (*zaichō kanjin*) in these offices chafed at dependence on the court, and sought security for their holdings through patronage and violence. From the late Heian period, families such as the Ōuchi of Suō established themselves as local functionaries and then, in the Kamakura period, sought to diversify their portfolios by adding *jitō* positions. In some cases, local functionaries helped proprietary agents defeat *jitō* and their deputies, who sought to take control of estates on which they had been placed.[17]

The capture of estates by *jitō* has been a central theme of medieval history. Although ostensibly administering estates belonging to court proprietors, *jitō* enjoyed immunity from direct court control; proprietor complaints about misbehaving *jitō* could only be adjudicated by Kamakura. Nagahara Keiji, Jeffrey Mass and others focused on this dual identity as the key to local warrior self-advancement, highlighting the tendency of the shogunate to seek compromise, rather than rule in favor of one party or the other, in the expanding number of probate and territorial contest disputes that arose during the thirteenth century. Regional trends similar to those cited in the case of *shugo* can also be identified. In eastern Japan, where most *gokenin* homelands were located, *jitō* acquired managerial titles over estates of aristocrats and other head proprietors and contractually forwarded taxes—but also established the beginnings of domains. In the capital region, the strength of the court held off incursions by eastern warriors until the 1330s. *Jitō* received increased appointments in western Japan after Kamakura's 1221 victory in the Jōkyū War, and in those regions, stewards' assaults on proprietors' portions sometimes led to compromises in which proprietors and *jitō* divided the actual territory of the estate (*shitaji chūbun*).[18]

As nascent local lords, *jitō* played important roles in the commercialization of Japan. Rising warrior debt pushed some to attempt to expand their control beyond the terms initially allotted to them. They managed markets, and extracted cash from estate residents and merchants. Although many studies of *jitō* emphasize the coalescing of power-bases around family heads (*sōryō*), some *jitō* who possessed homelands in eastern or central Japan together with holdings in the west also exploited partible inheritance to develop domestic and overseas trade networks, becoming agents of port-town urbanization.[19]

Although historians focus most often on *jitō* as the architects of local warrior lordship, to be successful *jitō* needed to oust managers appointed by the proprietor. Such figures could also build local power-bases on the estates, and some even established themselves as trans-generational warrior lords by opposing the *jitō* and working with proprietors. Amino Yoshihiko noted that such local experts often had connections to multiple estates, which facilitated commercial and subsistence connections among estates.[20]

Akutō

Akutō ("evil bands") have become prominent in the historiography of Kamakura-era territorial disputes and the growth of local lordship in medieval Japan. Early scholars understood the term to have had a stable, objective referent. More recently, historians have interpreted it as a subjective

label of outlawry used by entrenched, document-creating elites and their institutions to demonize a range of individuals who disturbed the social order. Amino explored "evil bands" within the context of a larger non-agricultural population of peoples with special skillsets (*shokunin*), including "pirates" (*kaizoku*) and "entrepreneurs" (*utokunin*), who regularly transgressed borders and spearheaded medieval commercialization. Other historians have seen *akutō* as indicative of a societal shift in which the population had lost faith in Kamakura as an effective vehicle for the resolution of disputes, and instead sought to carve out autonomous domains for themselves. Suits claiming collusion between *shugo*, *jitō*, and *akutō* have similarly been interpreted as signaling weakness in the late Kamakura regime. Arms-bearing figures from various backgrounds attempted to exploit shogunal enforcement of the immunity of estates from *shugo* entry to engage in illegal activities, including piracy in Korea. Still other historians note that the perceived threat of *akutō* also coincided with Kamakura's attempt to organize warriors for the Mongol Invasions. Finally, *akutō* represented a prime source of recruits for Go-Daigo in his war to restore imperial rule in Japan.[21]

Local autonomy in the Muromachi period

The wars that engulfed the archipelago in the wake of Go-Daigo's ascendancy, the fall of Kamakura shogunate, the establishment of rival imperial courts, and the rise of the Ashikaga shoguns largely erased the significance of earlier titles and labels. Endemic warfare provided opportunities for fighting men from all backgrounds to perform services as warriors in return for rewards in the form of confirmation of homelands or additional territories, and to do so in ways that ensured their relative autonomy by playing one center of authority against the other.[22] Historiography has focused on five key groups: military governors (*shugo*), *daimyō, kokujin* (literally, "provincials"), *ikki* (leagues), and villagers.

While earlier studies of these groups searched for the roots of early modern Japan, more recent scholarship argues that this teleological perspective twists our reading of the past to privilege institutions and battles that led to the victories of the three unifiers (Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu). Historians today tend to describe the autonomous groups of the late medieval period as Janus-figures, with one face looking forward and one to the past, seeking restoration of tradition while innovating new institutions. In like manner, discussions of authority have shifted from a focus on land tenure as the basis of control to an embrace of multiple forms of territoriality and routes to local power.[23]

Both "*shugo*" and "*daimyō*" are terms used to denote regional lords, but they are in fact quite different. Although the title of *daimyō* took on a formal institutional definition under the Toyotomi and Tokugawa regimes, it was, for centuries before that, an informal and descriptive label for regional magnates. In contrast, *shugo* was an institutional office appointed by the Kamakura and Muromachi shogunates.

The Muromachi-period *shugo* has for many reasons been a difficult figure for historians to pin down. Scholars have long noted the contradictions between the prescriptions for *shugo* laid out in the Ashikaga law codes, and historical realities. Moreover, the circumstances of recipients of *shugo* titles varied, making extrapolation from particular cases difficult, and the nature of both the office itself and those who held it transformed considerably between the beginning and the end of the Muromachi period.

During the early Muromachi period, the Ashikaga simultaneously accepted the need to court local support by entitling powerful local lords, and attempted to restrict the power of local elites. They assigned relatives of the Ashikaga shogunal line to *shugo* positions, and split the jurisdictions of powerful *shugo*. At the height of Ashikaga power, under the shoguns Yoshimitsu (1358–1408)

and Yoshinori (1394–1441), *shugo* were constrained by shogunal military power and a requirement to maintain a residence in the capital.[24] During the period of Ashikaga decline in the aftermath of the Ōnin War, *shugo* houses either survived to become autonomous magnates or were displaced by other provincial warriors.[25]

While the earliest scholarship on *shugo* and *daimyō* focused on individual warlords, by the 1960s historians were analyzing both constructs in terms of categories and stages of development, seeing *daimyō* as products of larger social structures. For Marxists, these schematic models sought to chart the growth of "feudal" land tenure.[26] In contrast, John W. Hall presented a four-stage ("*shugo-daimyō*," "*sengoku-daimyō*," "*shokuhō daimyō*," and "*kinsei daimyō*") theory of warlord evolution, based on Weberian ideal types that plotted a course to the early modern polity.[27] More recent scholarship, however, emphasizes continuity over categorical divisions, as the *shugo* title remained a significant mark of status well into the sixteenth century.

Many debates related to *shugo* swirl around the concept of agency—how much power did military governors have to influence events, in comparison to local warrior elites? Imatani Akira, Nagahara Keiji, Sugiyama Hiroshi, and others saw the *shugo* as the "driving force in the feudal overlord system," the figures that developed systems of land tenure as *daimyō* and "established regional feudal authority."[28]

The importance of land tenure to much scholarship early on placed in historians' sights *shugo* receipt of tax-collection privileges from the shogunate. These included the right to retain half the tax from their provinces (*hanzei*) and the right to levy extra land taxes (*tansen*). Evaluations of the effect of these tax privileges—which were justified by the need to ensure that the *shugo* had sufficient military resources at their disposal—range widely, with some scholars seeing them as an indicator of the end of the estate system, and others as an attempt to preserve the territories of court powers by limiting warrior exactions. Many historians point to the importance of these privileges for *shugo* seeking to break free of Kyoto as autonomous lords, develop a power-base, re-organize retainer bands, and establish new controls over villages and cities.[29]

Whereas *shugo* were once seen primarily as agents of change—destroyers of the classical order—since the 1970s historians have also highlighted the degree to which they also represented, and depended upon, the traditional order. After all, it was their shogunal connections that separated *shugo* from other provincial warriors. Preferential access to the shogun enabled military governors to acquire licenses for overseas trade, grant toll exemptions (*kasho*), receive taxation privileges, participate in central politics, and gain access to canonical warrior ritual texts (*buke kojitsusho*) preserved by the shogunate. At the same time, as the heads (*sōryō*) of extensive familial networks, they could also call on resources based on kinship.

Other scholars point to the continuities between late Kamakura-period and early Muromachi-era *shugo*, and to the fact that military governors tended to rely on the estates and districts of the old regime as administrative units. Sakurai Eiji, for example, has argued that *shugo* were able to become powerful by positioning themselves as the saviors of the estates and then absorbing those territories. They exploited residence in Kyoto to connect with aristocrats who hoped the *shugo* would preserve their revenues, and simultaneously accepted complaints from estate residents seeking relief from stewards' exactions, while those same stewards also looked to the *shugo* to attempt to reinforce their claims to the estate.[30]

Sengoku daimyō

As heroes and villains of Japanese national heritage, warlords of the Sengoku period have been analyzed in myriad ways, but studies on them can be charted on interconnected axes that resemble the debates concerning *shugo*, including the utility of studying *daimyō* as "great men" or as ideal

types tied to social structures. Much scholarship on *daimyō* concerns the nature of their lordship and whether they represented dynamic harbingers of a new age or more conservative forces.[31] Historians' choices of precisely which *daimyō* they study impact their interpretations. The well-documented Go-Hōjō, for example, represented paradigmatically strong, forward-looking *daimyō*. Examination of earlier and smaller-scale figures, by contrast, reveals considerable complexity and, in the words of David Spafford, that "the resilience of established ways of thinking—the persistent medieval—conditioned action … as a part of change itself."[32]

Many historians emphasize the degree to which *sengoku daimyō* relied on traditional sources of authority and medieval styles of lordship. Even strong *daimyō* like the Ōuchi, Ōtomo, and Mōri sought *shugo* titles. Warring among *daimyō* might, moreover, be brought to an end by the mediation of even the weakest Ashikaga shoguns. On the other hand, *daimyō* were enmeshed in feuds and alliances. Leagues of retainers (*hikan ikki*) could constrain the autonomy of their overlord. Retainers felt free to abandon lords lacking the "ability" (*kiryō*) to enforce, confirm, and recognize their territorial claims. To counter this, many *daimyō* made treaties with one another to return wayward vassals who sought to change their locus of service.

Daimyō ideologies of duties and service drew on both public precedents and private law. Their territories were often defined in terms of older *ritsuryō* nomenclature for provinces and districts. Cultural diffusion to the provinces constituted not new centers, but the fruits of provincial warriors entering into networks of religious belief, patronage, politics, and art centered in Kyoto. For John W. Hall, the *sengoku daimyō* were both symptomatic and a cause of the chaos of the late medieval age in their attempts to "become absolute masters of land and people within their territories."[33]

Katsumata Shizuo is representative of a group of scholars who interpret the *daimyō* as looking forward toward the early modern polity. Whereas, he argues, the *shugo* possessed titles on a provincial scale, *sengoku daimyō* began from smaller power bases that they actually controlled and transformed into quasi-states. These warlords centered their domains first on their extended family (*ichimon*) and then expanded dominion through conquest and the incorporation of their retainer bands (*kashindan*) into centralized institutions organized along fictive kinship lines (*yorioya*). This family system, he contends, replaced the *sōryō* house-headship model of organization. *Daimyō* identified their new corporate-family domains as "states" (*kokka*). They employed new absolutist ideologies that depicted themselves and their lordship as "the public good" (*kōgi*). *Daimyō* innovated new forms of territoriality. They surveyed lands, assessed value in copper currency (*kandaka*). They made war against their neighbors with impunity. They also made their own laws. Katsumata argues that *daimyō* legal codes illustrate two trends. He sees absolutist ambitions on the part of *daimyō* in their attempts to limit the autonomous action (*jiriki*) of retainers by making the *daimyō* the sole arbiter of disputes. But he also shows how retainers constrained *daimyō* by making them subject to the laws of their own *kokka*.[34]

Historians credit *daimyō* with innovating castle construction, military revolutions, and urbanization—moving retainers into their new castle towns, which they turned into new political-cultural centers, sometimes known as "little Kyotos." Some scholars even interpret negotiations between *daimyō* as "diplomacy" (*gaikō*) between "regional states" (*chiiki kokka*). *Daimyō* also involved themselves in foreign affairs; *daimyō* of western Japan focused on foreign trade and diplomacy as much as regional conquest.[35]

Debates are further enlivened by regional variation among *daimyō*. Yamamuro Kyōko identified differences between *daimyō* of eastern and western Japan based on the ways that they appropriated and employed document forms from the shogunate, and the relative speed with which they adopted changes in era names (*nengō*). Nagahara Keiji found implementation of tax assessment and collection in cash (*kandaka*) most pronounced in eastern Japan, slightly weaker in

western Japan, and weakest in the capital region, where traditional proprietors retained the most control.[36]

Studies of warlords have also laid bare processes of commercialization, showing how *daimyō* domains grew in part by exploiting and administering commercial trade networks, which arose in part from *daimyō* need to secure access to war materiel, foodstuffs, and other goods in order to expand and preserve their new centers. Some historians attribute the success of magnates in transforming themselves into *daimyō* to the development of regional economic systems based on control of the "public spaces" (*kugai*): interstitial roads, sea-lanes, ports, barriers, markets, and lodges. Others note that *daimyō* relied on and sponsored favored independent merchant contractors. Direct control often required *daimyō* to subdue those retainers and other warriors who made a living through the taxation of commerce and operation of toll barriers. I have argued that figures labeled "pirates" (*kaizoku*) actually innovated distinctive forms of maritime dominion by developing and regulating access to shipping networks. They provided maritime military and commercial services for land-based *daimyō*, appropriated rhetorics of lordship from those warlords, and projected identities as sea lords. Sea-lordship was then reified by the protection monies given by travelers and grants from *daimyō* patrons.[37]

Kokujin

By the 1960s, scholars seeking the origins of later medieval and early modern *daimyō* lordship had begun to turn from the *shugo* to other, more localized warrior houses in the provinces, collectively known as *kokujin* (literally "provincials"). This scholarly shift of attention to *kokujin* as the engine of Muromachi society occurred for many reasons. First, studies of *shugo* showed that while their jurisdiction extended to whole provinces, their actual territorial control tended to be smaller—most of the lands in any given province lay in the hands of *kokujin*. Second, historians noted that very few of the original *shugo* families survived into the Sengoku period. Most fell victim to infighting or were overthrown by deputies or other provincials.

"*Kokujin*" is, in fact, a broad historical label that encompasses warrior houses from a diverse array of backgrounds, including families of former *jitō* and other local estate officers, members of *shugo* families, *shugo* deputies (*shugo-dai*), pirates, and villager elites. For *jitō* houses, the fall of Kamakura meant that the original guarantor of their portfolio had disappeared, and possession required physical control. Many historians focus on the emergence of *kokujin* such as the Mōri and Kobayakawa, who made a choice to abandon far-flung territories, concentrate on a single power-base, and expand it into contiguous territories. As David Spafford argues, however, this treatment assumes a rational-choice motive, when, in fact, attachment to original holdings and other territories took many forms, including efforts to retain scattered holdings.[38]

Kokujin followed diverse routes to power. They might enter into patron-client relations with the shogunate and serve as part of the Shogunal Guard (*hōkōshū*). They could also serve in the administrative or military offices of *shugo*. Some *kokujin* exploited ties with villages, where they combined military service with entrepreneurial roles in regional commercial economies. Others developed power-bases in niches such as littoral holdings and ports, becoming overseers of shipping concerns, ports, protection businesses, and maritime production, though Sakurai Eiji cautions that their individual power-bases were often too small to control interregional commerce. Increasingly, however, historians analyze *kokujin* as local warriors who collectively exercised authority as parts of leagues, known as *ikki*.[39]

Ikki horizontal attachment in medieval Japan

Historians traditionally discussed medieval social organization mainly in terms of hierarchical structures. Today, however, most acknowledge the extent to which a horizontal organizational warp complemented the vertical hierarchical woof in the fabric of regional society in late medieval estates, *daimyō* domains, villages, war bands, and temples. The appearance of "leagues" (*ikki*, literally "of one goal" or "in agreement") composed of peers and near-peers constituted one of the most consequential examples of this phenomenon.

Studies of medieval *ikki* carry the burden of dealing with analytical lenses shaped by the early modern period (during which the term *ikki* came to signify protest and rebellion), and perpetuated by Marxists and proponents of modernization theory. Marxists highlighted the resistance of leagues to the feudal authority of warriors. In contrast, John W. Hall saw *ikki* resistance as no match for the institutional power of the *daimyō*, "ephemeral" organizations that "had trouble perpetuating a lasting order."[40]

Katsumata Shizuo's seminal analyses have enabled scholars to understand horizontal leagues as fundamental, lasting structures of medieval society. Katsumata draws on anthropological insights into festivals (*matsuri*) and emphasizes the "extraordinary" character of *ikki*. Emerging out of Buddhist temples, the league concept and structure swept across medieval Japan. Typically, Katsumata explains, participants used oaths, the consumption of a "holy elixir of common cause" (*ichimi shinsui*), and other ritual practices to synchronize the members of a league in single-minded devotion (*ichimi dōshin*) to achieve a goal beyond the ordinary capabilities of individuals.[41]

Katsumata's insights into the ritual underpinnings to the *ikki* have helped deepen analyses of commoner resistance. Estate residents employed *ikki* to protest the exactions of managers and warriors in the Kamakura and Muromachi periods.[42] Mary Elizabeth Berry treats the Yamashiro *kuni ikki* and *tokusei ikki* as part of a larger "politics of demonstration" unleashed by a collective desire for redress (*jiriki*) on the part of commoners and low-ranking warriors. Such *ikki* sought the restoration of old privileges as much as the transformation of the political and economic orders.[43]

In contrast to scholars who see *ikki* as transient phenomena, Kurushima Noriko argues that collective action in *ikki* proved transformative when war bands, corporate villages, and religious organizations could find ways to institutionalize the leagues and make them permanent.[44] Kurushima and Ike Susumu have identified similarities and symbiotic relationships between the hierarchical authority of *daimyō* and various *ikki*. Kurushima notes that both *daimyō* and *ikki* accepted the existence of a transcendent authority. The *ikki* depended on oaths to the gods to ensure their survival, and *daimyō* could insert themselves into that relationship as the guarantor of those figures' survival. "Whole province leagues" (*sōkoku ikki*) enabled commoners to lay claim to public authority for a territorial region similar to *daimyō* domains. Kurushima and Ike also argue that *daimyō* embraced *ikki* as a way to mobilize forces. For Kurushima, *kokujin* constituents of the retainer band often exercised considerable power over the *shugo* and *daimyō* collectively as "leagues of retainers" (*hikan ikki*), at times even determining house succession. For, Ike the collective *ikki* made possible the work of the *daimyō* house head across *sengoku* society. The case of the Mōri family has become the paradigmatic example of *daimyō* house evolving out of a *kokujin ikki*.[45]

The most powerful of the late medieval leagues was arguably the Ikkō Ikki, which controlled several provinces, governed a vast network of branch temples, and administered sprawling commercial enterprises during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Historical scholarship on the Ikkō phenomenon has varied considerably in presentation of the political, military, economic,

and religious aspects of Ikkō power in the identification of the prime movers of the movement. Marxists have seen the Ikkō movement as an alliance between village-level warriors and peasants who embraced the "millenarian ideological framework for the rural revolution" provided by the tenets of the Jōdo Shinshū ("True Pure Land") sect of Buddhism, and on which leaders capitalized to become theocrats. In contrast, other historians downplay piety and focus almost exclusively on the Ikkō sect's military and economic challenge to warrior hegemony. More recent work considers the ways in which the hierarchical military, military, and religious power of the Ikkō sect's patriarch relied on the communal action of the league members.[46]

Villagers

Village studies have long been prominent in scholarship on late medieval autonomy. The autonomy of small proprietors was aided immensely by the growth of permanent villages from around 1300. During what William Wayne Farris has called the "Muromachi optimum" of 1280–1450, multiple harvests per year became possible, which sparked additional taxation by estate managers and local warriors, cash-cropping and commercial growth, and the consolidation of settlements into villages. Written sources for villages survive unevenly, however, with the best-documented villages clustered in the capital region, where court proprietary power remained strongest.[47]

Early postwar scholarship, dominated by Marxist analyses, focused on elements that illuminated class conflicts. The scope of *sengoku ikki* led some scholars to present the late medieval period as a "bright" time for villagers seeking spaces of stability and liberty, in contrast to the "dark," constraints of early modern "feudalism." For other historians, the ubiquity of medieval violence inverted this light-dark dichotomy. More recent work has been multidimensional, exploring the ways in which villagers enmeshed themselves in webs of patronage with traditional proprietors, shoguns, *shugo*, and *daimyō* or banded together in horizontal alliances to preserve water rights and resolve conflicts.[48]

Fujiki Hisashi includes villagers as part of the culture of Sengoku "self-redress" (*jiriki*), engaged in cycles of feuds, reprisals, and alliances. He stresses the mercenary character of villager-warriors who floated between *daimyō* as "irregulars" (*zōhyō*), part-time warriors engaged in seasonal military labor and specialists in military activities deemed dishonorable by more elite warriors. In order to survive, "irregulars" took and sold slaves, and looted fields of crops.[49]

Hitomi Tonomura shows how village collectives (*sō*) cut deals with proprietors in which the collectives took responsibility for forwarding revenues, and the proprietors defended the interests of the villages as patrons. These village interests included commercial production and transportation. Some families of village elites became *kokujin* who straddled boundaries between warrior and villager. Families like the Kawashima, studied by Suzanne Gay, embraced a diverse portfolio of interests that included commerce, military service, conflict mediation, and moneylending. Such figures exploited possession of both *shōen* institutional identities and vassalage ties with the shogunate. They also proved integral to uniting local warriors and villages in leagues of both local and provincial scale.[50]

Re-envisioning centers and peripheries in medieval Japan

Narratives of medieval Japanese local autonomy bestow verdicts on the relationships between centers, peripheries, and narratives of national history. Explorations of *daimyō* lordship have opened up ways of understanding connections of villages to political centers, often anticipating the early modern "separation of warrior and peasant" (*heinō bunri*). In the east, *daimyō* like the

Hōjō attempted to increase the size of their militaries with villager conscripts, while more closely binding their warrior retainers to serve them. *Daimyō* registered villagers and assessed their lands in order to organize infantry bands and standardize tax collection. In return, the *daimyō* met village interests by backing the residents against local lords and moving samurai to castle towns, in effect ending the local domainal autonomy of many *kokujin*. In western Japan, although *daimyō* engaged in land assessments, they typically left villages in the hands of retainers.[51]

After the Meiji Restoration, and the invention of medieval Japan as a period, historians employed modern Rankean, empirical methods to demonstrate equivalencies between Japan and Europe, whether in "feudal" warlords or the pirates adventuring in China, and so illuminate Japan's national spirit as essentially un-Asian. For Marxists, narratives of local autonomy documented dialectics of class struggle in order to illustrate shifts from one period to another. For modernization scholars like John W. Hall, the Japanese case was significant because its "isolation" provided scholars a "closed system" laboratory for exploring and proving tenets of institutional change. The medieval period was a time of transition and competition over land tenure when family-based, feudal authority reached its zenith in the *sengoku daimyō*. This narrative removed Japan from Asia and supported a nationalist mythology of indigenous, self-generated modernization.[52]

In the post-Cold-War world, studies of local autonomy took on new significance as some historians embarked on a debunking of nationalist mythologies. They opened up new vistas by fusing "foreign relations history" (*taigai kankeishi*), which incorporated close readings of foreign sources with domestic ones, the findings of archaeologists, and political-historical explorations of medieval local autonomy. In so doing, they have demonstrated the degree to which medieval Japan was a site of cosmopolitan interaction and ethnic diversity.

In particular, they target two pervasive nationalist myths, one that ahistorically maps Japan as a political and cultural entity onto the Japanese archipelago as it is known today, and a second that treats the "Japanese" as a homogenous ethnic group.[53] Inhabitants of so-called peripheries exploited connections to centers beyond Kyoto and Kamakura, took advantage of perceptions that certain geographies were unattached to any center, and transformed autonomous domains into new political, economic, and cultural centers.

Japanese sovereignty fluctuated over time, and medieval borders persisted in ambiguous, shifting states. Military governors and warlords established new centers connected to both Japanese and foreign ecumenes. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Sō, rulers of the island of Tsushima, accepted concomitantly a position in the Ashikaga provincial administration as military governors (*shugo*) and investiture as officials by the Chosŏn Korean court. The Ōuchi arguably represented the acme of autonomous *daimyō* diplomacy. They pressed the Chosŏn court to recognize their claim of descent from a Korean prince in order to secure privileged trading status with the peninsular kingdom, attempted to monopolize tribute trade with Ming China, all while controlling shogunal succession in the early sixteenth century and even attempting to move the emperor to their capital at Yamaguchi.[54] In northeast Japan, the Hiraizumi Fujiwara, Andō, and Nanbu families maintained links to Ezo (present-day Hokkaido) and Siberia equal to their connections to Kyōto. Studies of these families have helped scholars reach insights into hybridity, "frontier zones," trade with "transmarine Northeast Asia," and "ethnogenesis."[55]

Smaller scale warriors, pirates, and merchants generated much of this overseas interaction. Estate residents engaged in foreign trade and sent luxury goods to capital aristocrats. Pirates and fisher folk developed hybrid, cosmopolitan identities sailing between Japan and Korea. By the sixteenth century, multiethnic (*taminzoku*) "Japanese pirate" (*wakō* in Japanese; read as *waegu* in Korean and *wokou* in Mandarin) bands brought Japanese from across western Japan into contact with Koreans, Chinese, Portuguese, Southeast Asians, and even Africans. A dark side to such

piracy can be seen in the violence wrought on the coasts of Korea and China and the sale of captives in markets across Japan. Late medieval ports and *daimyō* domains housed diasporas of Chinese, Korean, and European merchants.[56]

Amino's assertions that certain medieval peoples and spaces operated in ways "unattached" (*muen*) to institutional powers of any center transformed historiography. This work illuminated spaces such as seas and mountains as well as male and female peripatetic wanderers. Subsequent scholarship then called into question the applicability of the term "unattached" to some of those locations. Estate residents, warriors, and "sea lords" innovated forms of territoriality, such as sea tenure, that central authorities recognized and legitimized.[57]

The idea of diversity in Japan has also inspired debates over the persistence of alternative political and cultural realms within the archipelago. Amino presented the east and the northeast as semi-independent spaces within the archipelago, going so far as to suggest that the tenth-century rebellion of Taira Masakado and even the establishment of the Kamakura shogunate need to be understood as regionalist assertions of independence—the result of persistent memories of eastern Japan as an autonomous realm. In contrast, Noguchi Minoru and Jeffrey Mass argued that eastern warriors colonized western and northern Japan, replacing court authority with military justice. Mass also maintained that estates and public lands in the east were administered using exactly the same institutional devices and documents as in other parts of the archipelago, although he acknowledged that fewer estates were to be found in the east. Carving out a middle path, David Spafford historicizes regionality of the Kantō, arguing that late medieval eastern warriors and literate elites relied on and modified earlier precedent in making aesthetic and territorial claims that constituted a discourse constructing the Kantō as a distinct geographical space.[58]

These explorations of center and periphery highlight the dynamism that research from a perspective of local autonomy can infuse into historiography on medieval Japan, transforming our understanding of not only coastal reaches of the archipelago, but also political centers. Studies of local autonomy and center and periphery have illuminated how so-called peripheral seafarers inspired new worldviews that transformed the traditional worldviews of capital elites. Drawing on the results of archaeological excavations as well as written materials from historical sites in both southern islands and northern reaches, historians have suggested newer models of "transplanted centers" or additional cultural centers.[59]

Notes

1 *Shiki* and the system of rights and perquisites over lands and peoples in the provinces are discussed in more detail in Chapter 8 of this volume.
2 Nishitani Masahiro, "Shōensei no tenkai to shoyū kōzō," 116–120; Jeffrey P. Mass, "Of Hierarchy and Authority at the End of Kamakura," 18–19; Thomas Keirstead, *The Geography of Power in Medieval Japan*, ch. 1, note 46.
3 Keirstead includes a historiographical essay on the decline of the estate system in *The Geography of Power in Medieval Japan*.
4 Nagahara Keiji, "The Decline of the Shōen System"; Nishitani, "Shōensei no tenkai to shoyū kōzō," 130–135.
5 Mass, "Of Hierarchy and Authority"; Miyagawa Mitsuru, "From Shōen to Chigyō: Proprietary Lordship and the Structure of Local Power"; Nishitani, "Shōensei no tenkai to shoyū kōzō," 136–140; Imatani Akira, "Muromachi Local Government: *Shugo* and *Kokujin*"; Nagahara, "The Decline of the Shōen System"; Nagahara Keiji, "The Sengoku *Daimyō* and the Kandaka System," 28–29.
6 Mass, "Of Hierarchy and Authority"; Hitomi Tonomura, *Community and Commerce in Late Medieval Japan: The Corporate Villages of Tokuchin-ho*; Peter D. Shapinsky, *Lords of the Sea: Pirates, Violence, and Commerce in Late Medieval Japan*, ch. 3; Sakurai Eiji, *Muromachibito no seishin*, 199–202 and "Chūsei no shōhin ichiba"; Nishitani, "Shōensei no tenkai to shoyū kōzō," 140–144; Keistead, *The Geography of*

Power in Medieval Japan, 55–57; Ethan I. Segal, *Coins, Trade, and the State: Economic Growth in Early Medieval Japan*.

7 Keirstead, *The Geography of Power in Medieval Japan*, 114–118; Nishitani, "Shōensei no tenkai to shoyū kōzō," 139; Mary Elizabeth Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*; Fujiki Hisashi, *Toyotomi heiwarei to sengoku shakai*; Ike Susumu, "Sengoku to wa nani ka," 7.

8 John W. Hall, "Japan's Sixteenth-Century Revolution"; Nagahara, "The Decline of the Shōen System"; 261; Kurushima Noriko, *Ikki to sengoku daimyō*, 73.

9 Karl F. Friday, *Samurai, Warfare and the State in Early Medieval Japan*; Takahashi Osamu, "Bushidan to ryōshu shihai," 165–167; Noguchi Minoru, *Buke no tōryō no jōken: chūsei bushi o minaosu*; Ikegami Hiroko, "Sengoku no sonraku"; Katsumata Shizuo, *Sengoku jidairon*, 280–284.

10 Takahashi, "Bushidan to ryōshu shihai," 167; Jeffrey P. Mass, "Identity, Personal Names and Kamakura Society," 92.

11 John W. Hall, *Government and Local Power 500–1700: A Study Based on Bizen Province*; David Spafford, "What's in a Name: House Revival, Adoption and the Bounds of Family in Late Medieval Japan"; Kurushima Noriko, *Ikki to sengoku daimyō*, 30–31; Miyazaki Fumiko, "Religious Life of the Kamakura Bushi: Kumagai Naozane and His Descendants," 443–445; Thomas D. Conlan, *State of War: The Violent Order of Fourteenth-Century Japan*, 6–7; Conlan, "Thicker than Blood: The Social and Political Significance of Wet Nurses in Japan, 950–1330."

12 Jeffrey P. Mass, *Lordship and Inheritance in Early Medieval Japan*; Hitomi Tonomura, "Women and Inheritance in Japan's Early Warrior Society"; Spafford, "What's in a Name."

13 Yamamoto Kōji, *Yoritomo no tenka sōsō*, 80–85.

14 Jeffrey P. Mass, *Yoritomo and the Founding of the First Bakufu: The Origins of Dual Government in Japan;* Friday, *Samurai, Warfare and the State*, 46–49, 56–57; Takahashi Noriyuki, "Jitōsei, gokeninsei kenkyū no shindankai o saguru."

15 Mass, *Yoritomo and the Founding of the First Bakufu*; Yanagihara Toshiaki, "Chūsei no kōtsū to chiikisei," 135; Kakehi Masahiro, *Mōkō shūrai to tokuseirei*, 58–65.

16 Nagahara, "The Decline of the Shōen System," 264; Pierre F. Souyri, *The World Turned Upside Down: Medieval Japanese Society*, 55; Kakehi Masahiro, *Mōkō shūrai to tokuseirei*, 42–56; Andrew E. Goble, *Kenmu: Go-Daigo's Revolution*.

17 Miyamoto Shinpei, "Kamakura-ki kuge chigyōkoku no kokumu un'ei"; Peter J. Arnesen, *The Medieval Japanese Daimyō: The Ōuchi Family's Rule of Suō and Nagato*, ch. 2.

18 Nagahara, "The Decline of the Shōen System," 265–268; Jeffrey P. Mass, "Jitō Land Possession in the Thirteenth Century: The Case of *Shitaji Chūbun*"; Nishitani, "Shōensei no tenkai to shoyū kōzō," 135–136.

19 Segal, *Coins, Trade, and the State*, ch. 2; Amino Yoshihiko, *Rethinking Japanese History*, ch. 3*;* Yanagihara, "Chūsei no kōtsū to chiikisei," 134–135; Noguchi, *Buke no tōryō no jōken*, 156–163.

20 Amino Yoshihiko, *Kaimin to Nihon shakai: These are what Japan has Raised in its History*, 236; Kakehi Masahiro, *Mōkō shūrai to tokuseirei*, 65; Shapinsky, *Lords of the Sea*, ch. 3.

21 Morten Oxenboell, "Images of Akutō"; Amino Yoshihiko, *Akutō to kaizoku: Nihon chūsei no shakai to seiji*; Amino, *Rethinking Japanese History*, 83–84; Lorraine F. Harrington, "Social Control and the Significance of *Akutō*"; Goble, *Kenmu*, 107–112; Kakehi Masahiro, *Mōkō shūrai to tokuseirei*, 69–70; Thomas D. Conlan, *In Little Need of Divine Intervention: Takezaki Suenaga's Scrolls of the Mongol Invasions of Japan*, p. 202.

22 Mass, "Of Hierarchy and Authority"; Conlan, *State of War*; Friday, *Samurai, Warfare and the State*.

23 For critiques of teleology and creative uses of past precedents: Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*; Morgan Pitelka, *Handmade Culture: Raku Potters, Patrons, and Tea Practitioners in Japan*; David Spafford, *A Sense of Place: The Political Landscape in Late Medieval Japan*; Tonomura, *Community and Commerce*. For land, see Hall, *Government and Local Power*; Matsuoka Hisato, "The Sengoku *Daimyō* of Western Japan: The Case of the Ōuchi"; Arnesen, *The Medieval Japanese Daimyō*. For different forms of territoriality, see Shapinsky, *Lords of the Sea*. The routes by vassals and other parvenus acquired power have been often characterized using the historical expression "low overthrowing the high" (gekokujō) (Souyri, *The World Turned Upside Down*).

24 Most *shugo* were obliged to reside in Kyoto. The exception to this rule was that *shugo* under the jurisdiction of the Kantō deputy (Kamakura Kubō), resided in Kamakura.

25 The shogunate appointed regional commanders to eastern Japan (Kamakura Kubō) and Kyushu (Kyushu Tandai), who, with prestigious connections of blood and cultural capital to the Ashikaga shoguns, provided counterweights to powerful *shugo*. Thomas Nelson, "Bakufu and *Shugo* Under the Early

Ashikaga"; Kawai Masaharu, "Shogun and Shugo: The Provincial Aspects of Muromachi Politics"; Lorraine F. Harrington, "Regional Outposts of Muromachi Bakufu Rule: The Kantō and Kyushu"; Spafford, *A Sense of Place*.

26 Nagahara Keiji, *Sengoku no dōran*, 50–55; Souryi, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 203–209.

27 Hall, "Foundations of the Modern Japanese *Daimyō*."

28 Quoted in Imatani Akira, "Muromachi Local Government," 257–258.

29 Yata Toshifumi, *Nihon chūsei sengoku-ki kenryoku kōzō no kenkyū*; Arnesen, *The Medieval Japanese Daimyō*; for *hanzei*, see Prescott B. Wintersteen, Jr., "The Muromachi *Shugo* and *Hanzei*"; Conlan, *State of War*, 224–229; Imatani Akira, "Muromachi Local Government," 240–243; Miyagawa Mitsuru, "From Shōen to Chigyō," 90–91; Nagahara, "Decline of the Shōen System," 273–276; Kurushima Noriko, *Ikki to sengoku daimyō*, 217–220.

30 Imatani Akira, "Muromachi Local Government"; Miyagawa Mitsuru, "From Shōen to Chigyō," 105; Arnesen, *The Medieval Japanese Daimyō*; Shapinsky, *Lords of the Sea*; Mizuno Tetsuo, "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi ryōgoku ni okeru Ise-ryū buke kojitsu no juyō to tenkai"; Sakurai Eiji, *Muromachibito no seishin*, 204–207; Spafford, *A Sense of Place*, ch. 2.

31 A good historiographical essay on *daimyō* can be found in the introduction of Yata, *Nihon chūsei sengoku-ki kenryoku kōzō no kenkyū*.

32 Spafford, *A Sense of Place*, 17.

33 Souyri, *World Turned Upside Down*, 209; Miyagawa Mitsuru, "From Shōen to Chigyō," 101; Fujiki, *Toyotomi heiwarei to sengoku shakai*; Yata, *Nihon chūsei sengoku-ki kenryoku kōzō no kenkyū*; Kurushima Noriko, *Ikki to sengoku daimyō*; Sasaki Junnosuke, "The Changing Rationale of *Daimyō* Control in the Emergence of the Bakuhan State," 276–281; Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570–1680*, 27; Matthew P. McKelway, *Capitalscapes: Folding Screens and Political Imagination in Late Medieval Kyoto*, 2–3; Conlan, "The Failed Attempt to Move the Emperor"; Hall, "Japan's Sixteenth-Century Revolution," 10.

34 Katsumata Shizuo, "The Development of Sengoku Law."

35 Michael P. Birt, "Samurai in Passage: The Transformation of the Sixteenth-Century Kantō"; Steven D. Carter, *Literary Patronage in Late Medieval Japan*; Spafford, *A Sense of Place*; Ike Susumu, "Sengoku-ki chiiki kenryoku no '*kōgi*' ni tsuite," 12–13; Ike Susumu, "Sengoku-ki to 'kogi' "; Mary Elizabeth Berry, "Public Peace and Private Attachment: The Goals and Conduct of Power in Early Modern Japan," 269–271; Kage Toshio, *Ajia no naka no sengoku daimyō: Saigoku no gun'yū to keiei senryaku*; Marushima Kazuhiro, *Sengoku daimyō no gaikō*; Shapinsky, *Lords of the Sea*.

36 Yamamuro Kyōko, "Sengoku no chiikisei"; Nagahara, "The Sengoku *Daimyō* and the Kandaka System," 28–29.

37 Sasaki Gin'ya, "Sengoku *Daimyō* Rule and Commerce"; Yata, *Nihon chūsei sengoku-ki kenryoku kōzō no kenkyū*, 232–240; Kishida Hiroshi, *Daimyō ryōgoku no keizai kōzō*; Shapinsky, *Lords of the Sea*.

38 Miyagawa Mitsuru, "From Shōen to Chigyō"; Spafford, *A Sense of Place*, ch. 3.

39 Kawai Masaharu, "Shogun and Shugo," 73–74; Miyagawa Mitsuru, "From Shōen to Chigyō"; Imatani Akira, "Muromachi Local Government"; Nagahara, "The Decline of the Shōen System," 279; Suzanne Gay, "The Kawashima: Warrior-Peasants of Medieval Japan"; Sakurai Eiji, "Chūsei no shōhin ichiba," 226.

40 David L. Davis, "*Ikki* in Late Medieval Japan"; Amino, *Rethinking Japanese History*, 101–102; Souyri, *The World Turned Upside Down*; Hall, "Japan's Sixteenth-Century Revolution," p. 11.

41 Katsumata Shizuo, *Ikki*.

42 Keirstead, *The Geography of Power in Medieval Japan*, ch. 4.

43 Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*, 89–93.

44 Kurushima Noriko, *Ikki to sengoku daimyō*, 10.

45 Kurushima, *Ikki to sengoku daimyō*; Ike, *Sengoku daimyō to ikki*; Ike, "Sengoku-ke no 'kuni' ni tsuite"; Kawai Masaharu, "Shogun and Shugo," 80–84.

46 Souyri, *The World Turned Upside Down*, p. 194; Neil McMullin, *Buddhism and the State in Sixteenth-Century Japan*; Carol R. Tsang, *War and Faith: Ikkō Ikki in Late Muromachi Japan*.

47 Kristina Kade Troost, "Peasants, Elites, and Villages in the Fourteenth Century"; Farris, *Japan's Medieval Population*, 94–95, ch. 4; Nishitani Masahiro, "Shōensei no tenkai to shoyū kōzō," 137; Tonomura, *Community and Commerce*.

48 For "light" and "dark," see Fujiki, *Toyotomi heiwarei to sengoku shakai*, i–vi; for multidimensional explorations of autonomy and patronage, see Fujiki, *Toyotomi heiwarei to sengoku shakai*, 106–122.

49 Fujiki Hisashi, *Zōhyōtachi no senjō: chūsei no yōhei to doreigari*.

50 Tonomura, *Community and Commerce*; Gay, "The Kawashima"; Kurushima Noriko, *Ikki to sengoku daimyō*, 80.
51 Fujiki Hisashi, *Toyotomi heiwarei to sengoku shakai*; Ike Susumu, "Sengoku to wa nani ka"; Birt, "Samurai in Passage"; Kurushima Noriko, *Ikki to sengoku daimyō*, 68–70.
52 Thomas Keirstead, "Inventing Medieval Japan: The History and Politics of National Identity"; Yamada Nakaba, *Ghenkō: The Mongol Invasion of Japan*; Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History*; Hall, *Government and Local Power*; Conrad, "The Colonial Ties are Liquidated."
53 For interesting musings on this, see Keirstead, "Inventing Medieval Japan," 69–70.
54 Amino, *Rethinking Japanese History*; Bruce L. Batten, *To the Ends of Japan: Premodern Frontiers, Boundaries, and Interactions*; Murai Shōsuke, *Nihon chūsei kyōkai shiron*; Kenneth R. Robinson, "An Island's Place in History: Tsushima in Japan and Korea, 1392–1592"; Conlan, "The Failed Attempt to Move the Emperor to Yamaguchi and the Fall of the Ōuchi."
55 Mimi H. Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi: Buddhist Art and Regional Politics in Twelfth-Century Japan*; Murai Shōsuke, *Umi kara mita sengoku Nihon: rettōshi kara sekaishi e*, ch. 2; Alexander Bay, "The Swift Horses of Nukanobu: Bridging the Frontiers of Medieval Japan"; Mark J. Hudson, *Ruins of Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Japanese Islands*, ch. 8; Yanagihara, "Chūsei no kōtsū to chiikisei."
56 Murai Shōsuke, *Nihon chūsei kyōkai shiron*; *Chūsei Wajinden*; and *Ajia no naka no chūsei Nihon*; Benjamin Hazard, "The Formative Years of the Wakō, 1222–63"; Yanagihara, "Chūsei no kōtsū to chiikisei"; Kawazoe Shōji, "Japan and East Asia"; Mori Katsuhiko, "Chūsei Kyushu no kōeki-kō to Tōjinmachi"; Tanaka Takeo, *Wakō: Umi no rekishi*; Jurgis Elisonas, "The Inseparable Trinity: Japan's Relations with China and Korea"; Shapinsky, *Lords of the Sea*.
57 Amino, *Muen kugai raku: Nihon chūsei no jiyū to heiwa*; Conlan, *State of War*, p. 105; Hotate Michihisa, "Chūsei zenki no gyogyō to shōensei: kakai to ryōyū to gyomin o megutte"; Shapinsky, *Lords of the Sea*. For Amino, one reason to explore the concept of *muen*, non-agricultural commoners, and other peripheries was to better understand the role of the emperor as a persistent force in Japanese history.
58 Amino, *Rethinking Japanese History*, 262–266; Noguchi, *Buke no tōryō no jōken*; Jeffery P. Mass, "The Kamakura Bakufu," 68–72; Mass, *Yoritomo and the Founding of the First Bakufu*, 254; Spafford, *A Sense of* Place, ch. 1.
59 Yanagihara, "Chūsei no kōtsū to chiikisei"; Murai, *Nihon chūsei kyōkai shiron*; Murai, *Ajia no naka no chūsei Nihon*; Amino, *Nihon chūsei no hinōgyōmin to tennō* and *Rethinking Japanese History*, ch. 10.

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10
The imperial court in medieval Japan

Lee Butler

From the standpoint of government structures and political power, the imperial court of medieval Japan is a historiographic dead end. During the Kamakura era (1185–1334)—the first century and a half of the period traditionally defined as medieval—there was still political life in the court, but power was shared with the rising warriors, whose eventual eclipse of the old aristocracy was inevitable, at least as commonly interpreted by historians. Little wonder that the period is known by the name of the seat of warrior government, Kamakura, not by a title or term that describes the way the land was actually governed. With the rise of the Ashikaga family, which established the second warrior government or Muromachi shogunate (1336–1573), all vestiges of the imperial court's governing institutions were done away with. The court was finished.

But as the beginning student of Japan soon learns, neither emperor nor court disappeared from the stage of history, and the reemergence of the emperor as a galvanizing figure late in the Tokugawa period, as well as the weighty role he played thereafter in the modern imperial era, forces one to ask questions: "What happened in the intervening centuries?" "Did emperor and court remain relevant, and if so, what part did they play in politics and society?" "And if the part they played was insignificant, why was the institution not done away with sometime during those centuries?" It is an intriguing topic, one that has elicited a wide range of interpretations over the centuries, stretching back to the medieval era itself. In this sense, the court enjoys a particularly lengthy and rich historiography, though hardly one upon which historians have found reason to agree.

There are two main reasons for this. The first is that the issues surrounding the court during these centuries are complex and the answers elusive (of course, the same can be said of many topics, but few are so marked by political ambiguity and questions of significance, or the lack thereof, as the court). Adding to this is the second reason for disagreement, which is the court's political immediacy over time. In other words, providing an opinion about the imperial court—whether one was writing in the fourteenth, seventeenth, nineteenth, or twentieth centuries—was hardly a task for the disinterested scholar; instead it was usually a political act, a statement of belief or loyalty (or disloyalty). The result is that for much of history, the court's interpreters have been mythmakers, apologists, or detractors, individuals whose views have been shaped by ideologies surrounding the court of their time. This has rarely made for objective analysis.

And yet, important scholarship was produced in spite of this. Hemmed in though scholars of the court often were by the biases of their day or their limited vision, they (meaning primarily

native Japanese working from the fourteenth to mid-twentieth centuries) were nonetheless part of a rigorous intellectual tradition. As a result, while their arguments might in places be convoluted or distorted, they were not apt to ignore all evidence.

Representative of such work, complex in thought if occasionally strained in reasoning (at least from our perspective), are the writings of Arai Hakuseki (1657–1725), an early interpreter of the medieval court. As a broadly read Confucian scholar and powerful advisor to the sixth and seventh Tokugawa shoguns, Ienobu and Ietsugu, Hakuseki's view of the past was shaped both by practices within the East Asian history-writing tradition as well as by his favorable view of the Tokugawa regime. Yet he was no mere apologist for the Tokugawa. Furthermore, he accepted fully the position of the scholar-bureaucrat who not only sought intellectual understanding but actively shaped and guided government. Where the court was concerned, he was interested both in interpreting its place in the past and in defining its role in the present—a role he was confident would remain prominent.

Hakuseki's views of Japan's history are laid out most fully in *Tokushi yoron*, translated into English by Joyce Ackroyd as *Lessons from History*.[1] His concern was with power and authority—the uses and abuses of both, the way each was held and lost by rulers—and his analytical framework was the Mandate of Heaven, the Chinese notion that a ruler (in China, the emperor or "Son of Heaven") was endowed with the right to rule based on his ability to govern effectively. It was a simple and loose concept, both confirming the legitimacy of a ruler in power but also justifying his eventual overthrow. According to Hakuseki, authority had anciently resided with Japan's emperors; but by the time of Go-Daigo (r. 1318–1339) if not before, they had lost the mandate to rule, it having shifted to the warriors.

Despite the ascendance of the Tokugawa shoguns as the recipients of Heaven's mandate, for Hakuseki the touchstone of political legitimacy and practice remained the court. As described by Kate Wildman Nakai in *Shogunal Politics: Arai Hakuseki and the Premises of Tokugawa Rule*, Hakuseki strived to transform the workings and appearance of the shogun's court, making it more "kingly," meaning more like the institution in Kyoto. Accordingly, he effected reforms in everything from clothing and music to architecture, all in imitation of the imperial institution. Furthermore, in the face of a Korean embassy of 1711, in which the foreigners showed no inclination to admit Japanese superiority either in politics or ritual, Hakuseki argued in nativist fashion that "The *tenno* is a true Son of Heaven. He is not like the rulers of the successive dynasties of the western land, where mortals have succeeded to heaven and bearers of different surnames have established successive dynasties in turn."[2]

As we shall see, Hakuseki was not alone in employing intellectual juggling to define the emperor and court. The man (and occasional woman), as well as the imperial institution and its members, was a slippery figure, certainly to those determined to place him within the history of Japan.

The emperors

There are two ways to approach the historiography of the medieval court. One is by topic, the other by chronology. The second is in most respects the more logical, given the weight of contemporary thought and politics in each age, that is, the court's "political immediacy" that I earlier described. But one topic cuts across time, maintaining a persistent if debatable place in the scholarship over the centuries, so I will turn to it first: the role of the emperors.

Writing from the viewpoint of the Mandate of Heaven, Hakuseki's interest, as seen above, was in individual rulers, first the emperors, then the shoguns or other military heads. It was a common approach in the earliest histories of the medieval court and has remained a significant, if

problematic, thread in the historiography. The first work of this sort was Kitabatake Chikafusa's *Jinnō Shōtōki* ("A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns"), completed in 1343.[3] Kitabatake began his analysis with the age of the gods, and then followed the succession of emperors over the centuries that followed. Each chapter examines an emperor, many of whom were insignificant figures. This made for brief entries, but Chikafusa filled out his history by elaborating on the rule of key figures and offering insights and opinions about everything from court ceremonies and imperial titles to political intrigue and Buddhist schools and practices. Like Hakuseki, Chikafusa stressed the important roles of advisors, to the throne in Chikafusa's case, to both throne and shogun in Hakuseki's.

Important as they are for understanding the eras in which their authors lived, *Jinnō Shōtoki* and *Tokushi Yoron* have obvious limitations as treatises on the medieval court, primary among which is their restricted focus, limited as it is to individuals (meaning emperors and their advisors) and the visible workings of politics. In doing this, they miss much of the picture. And yet other scholars have followed in their steps, and usually done so in less interesting and less compelling ways. Such is the case of the British Japanophile Richard Ponsonby-Fane (1878–1937), whose work included not just an emperor-by-emperor history of Japan, from Jinmu to Shōwa, but also a study of the various princely houses, a history of exiled emperors, and an examination of Emperor Chōkei (r. 1368–1383) (who I must admit, scandalous though it would be to Ponsonby-Fane, I had never heard of), whose enthronement ceremony (*sokui*) was in doubt for many centuries, potentially removing him from the imperial line.[4]

More recently, Ben-Ami Shillony has written *Enigma of the Emperors: Sacred Subservience in Japanese History*. The title itself should be a warning to anyone interested in understanding the complexities of the imperial court over time, for it suggests certain unchanging characteristics among the emperors, be they individuals from the classical, medieval, or modern eras. The argument is summed up by the author in the statement:

> The reason for this strange survival [of the imperial house], like the reason for the extraordinary longevity of the dynasty, is that unlike other monarchs, the Japanese emperors combined sanctity with passivity to such an extent, that they were too subservient to rule, but too sacred to be deposed.[5]

In considering the emperors of the medieval period, one quickly concludes that this statement distorts more than it clarifies.

It is easy to dismiss these studies, but there are things to be learned from them, foremost among which is the folly of essentialist approaches—of scholarship that accepts the notion that emperors possessed certain unchanging attributes, or "essences." The point seems obvious when viewed at this level, broad in scope and simplistic in argument. But on a finer scale, the distinctions occasionally get ignored, as essentialist arguments slip into more discriminating studies. For example, although emperors might not have possessed unchanging essences, it seems the same cannot be said of courtiers, whose essences—defining them as highly cultured, effeminate, and bereft of practical abilities and interests—are often presented as having been fixed during the Heian period. One result has been an unwillingness to consider courtiers who led armies or managed estates in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries as anything other than aberrations. In fact, the evidence suggests a need to rethink the broader definition of "courtier," to free these individuals from the essences with which historians have endowed them.

One emperor of the medieval era who deserves careful study as an individual was Go-Daigo (1288–1339; r. 1318–1339), the subject of books in English by Paul Varley and Andrew Goble.[6] While Varley's treatment follows a traditional line, seeing Go-Daigo's efforts to assert power as

a "failed restoration," a reactionary move to reestablish power at court, Goble sees in him a revolutionary figure, open to a range of ideologies and flexible in approach as he attempted to create a new order. Although unable to establish the regime he desired, Go-Daigo, claims Goble, helped usher in the medieval era, an age generally believed to begin with the Kamakura shogunate a century and a half earlier.[7] These are large claims, and Goble's work elicited strong responses following its publication, both in opposition to as well as in support of his assertions. The most incisive discussion of the book, fair in its analysis and critical in its approach, is a review article by Reinhard Zollner.[8] There, Zollner acknowledges the contributions that Goble's extensive research and strong arguments make to scholarly discourse while raising doubts about his claims for Go-Daigo's revolutionary nature, among other points. Moreover, Zollner offers the clearest summary of recent historiography on the topic, noting the positions of scholars such as Matsumoto Shinpachirō, Nagahara Keiji, and Kuroda Toshio.

In considering the historical place of Go-Daigo more generally, as well as the heated responses to Goble's study, two points seem particularly significant. First, over the course of the twentieth century, academic historians moved away from the "great men" view of history. Important as an individual might be in establishing a new state, setting government policy, or leading an army, scholars have rejected the notion that history is driven by the actions and ideas of such figures. History and historical change move at a more basic, societal level. And even though Goble's history offers much more than the study of a "great man," there is still no question that he ascribes considerable weight to the actions of Go-Daigo. This is no doubt one reason for the heated responses the book elicited. Second, Go-Daigo's efforts, whether a restoration or revolution, failed. If in fact he effected important changes in society or government despite this failure, as Goble claims, then his efforts require careful consideration. If not, he is little more than a historical footnote, a figure who rose briefly but had limited lasting impact.

Another influential work on the medieval court that examines a single individual—albeit in this case a shogun, not an emperor—is Imatani Akira's 1991 study, *Muromachi no ōken*, summarized in English as "Not for Lack of Will or Wile: Yoshimitsu's Failure to Supplant the Imperial Line." Building upon a thesis first put forth in the 1920s, Imatani argues that Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358–1408, r. 1368–1394) intended to solidify his control of the state by replacing the imperial line with that of his own family: emperor and shogun were to be one and the same. Evidence of Yoshimitsu's intrusion into court affairs is plentiful—in making and approving court and religious appointments, sponsoring and regulating court celebrations and prayers, interfering in (if not in fact determining) imperial succession, and demanding ceremonial recognition for himself that was the prerogative of retired emperors. Yoshimitsu's "grand design" of supplanting the imperial line, argues Imatani, "was foiled only by his death."[9]

It is an intriguing notion, but a careful consideration of the issues involved raises many questions and doubts. To begin with, like Go-Daigo's restoration/revolution, Yoshimitsu's usurpation (assuming that was his goal) failed, and with it the broader significance it might have had. Furthermore, despite Imatani's conviction that Yoshimitsu's next step was to take over the throne, no evidence for that exists beyond his appropriation of the various powers noted above; as a result, many scholars remain unconvinced. There is also the question of what Yoshimitsu would have gained by unifying the two offices. Imatani speaks of usurping "imperial powers," but those listed above do not strike one as particularly weighty. If Yoshimitsu had his sights on greater imperial powers still, what were they? Or if not power, was he after imperial authority or prestige, or religious and sacred prerogatives? With this we are forcefully returned to the difficult question of what defined the court of the era, of what gave it lasting significance *at the time and among the elite* (and possibly among commoners, based on arguments by Amino Yoshihiko),[10] particularly since historians have long argued that it had been stripped of all practical powers by

the Muromachi era. Something about it mattered, at least Yoshimitsu thought it did, given his actions; but pinpointing what that consisted of is not a simple matter.

Another issue raised by Imatani is the idea of *ōken*, "kingly authority" or "sovereignty." Although he does not address it in his English-language article, sovereignty is a basic part of his book, as seen in the title, *Muromachi no ōken*. As Kondō Shigekazu points out, the term has received considerable attention at a theoretical level, with scholars debating its significance and relevance, the question of with whom it resided, and how and when it shifted—that is, from *tennō* to retired emperor to shogun—or if in fact it did not shift but instead remained with the *tennō* in an abstract sense.[11] Of course, most historians will argue that for much of classical and medieval Japan, sovereignty could not be reduced to the person of the emperor. Despite the decision in ancient times to establish the *tennō* in the manner of the Chinese Son of Heaven, in practice few Japanese emperors wielded power and authority that could be defined as sovereign—absolute and exclusive. Although Imatani seems to suggest that if Yoshimitsu had succeeded in his quest to make emperor and shogun one, the Ashikaga heads would have been endowed with "kingly authority" of a new magnitude, one wonders how that would have been manifest. Would that authority, for example, have redounded to their benefit in any practical fashion (such as giving Yoshimitsu and his successors more power to deal with recalicitrant military governors)? Or would it have made the regime impervious to the forces that emphatically undermined it just a few decades after Yoshimitsu's death? The answers seems obvious: certainly not.[12]

The medieval court in imperial Japan

Japan's new modern state, and the ideologies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that supported it, allowed little room for critical interpretations of emperor and court of any age, including the medieval era. As the symbol, indeed the essence, of both the Japanese state and people, the emperor was sacrosanct, something that was expected to be reflected in scholarship. One approach some historians took was to discover "imperial loyalists" of earlier eras, individuals such as Tateri Munetsugu (1528–1622), who worked in the imperial warehouses during the bleak years of the sengoku era.[13] That same strain of deep respect for the emperor extended even to men like Oda Nobunaga, as argued in an article entitled "Nobunaga no kinnō" or "Nobunaga's Loyalty to the Throne," published by Yoshikawa Teijirō in 1915.[14] This was clearly a different Nobunaga from the one who would show up in postwar scholarship.

Another possibility for scholars inclined to follow the chauvinistic tendencies of the era was to consider the positive historical influences of the emperors. If the Japanese character was unique, what better place to find the source of that than in the unbroken line of emperors? Representative works included Tsuji Zennosuke's *Kōshitsu to Nihon seishin* (The Imperial House and the Japanese Soul), published in 1936.[15] Unlike the staid and frustratingly vague titles of serious research put out by many presses in Japan today, Tsuji's title leaves no doubt as to the sorts of arguments he intended to make.

Despite the restricted political atmosphere, some scholars still made significant contributions to scholarship on the medieval court. A good example is Okuno Takahiro's *Kōshitsu gokeizaishi no kenkyū* ("A Study of Imperial House Economics"), published in two volumes in 1942 and 1944. A work of extensive research, Okuno's study is particularly thorough for the late medieval era. Noteworthy, too, is the fact that the only jingoistic references appear in the Introduction to the second volume, suggesting perhaps that Okuno was pressured to make up for omissions in Volume I. In any event, he provided typical platitudes—such as "The 3000-year radiance of our nation's history is centered upon the imperial line, the glory of our *kokutai*"—before moving forward with his scholarly analysis.

Post-World War II and beyond

With the conclusion of World War II, historians of Japan were at last freed from ideologies that had shaped the historiography of emperor and court over the centuries. Most immediately, they could now write of both the imperial institution and the individuals within it without fear of political reprisal. Nonetheless, for the better part of the next four decades the late medieval (and early modern) court received little attention from scholars. There were two reasons for this.

First, the broad acceptance by Japanese historians of economic materialism as the driving force in history made the court of these eras largely irrelevant. After all, if the medieval court held neither military power nor economic wealth, and in many respects functioned outside the framework of class conflict, what role could it have had in shaping Japan's history?[16]

Second, the general failure of Japanese intellectuals of the prewar period to resist the move to militarism and the emperor-centered ideology that supported it made the subject too painful to address, particularly since to study the court of these centuries—when it should have been done away with—was to give it life, as it were. The classical court, far in the past and a critical component of Japan's early history, was a suitable topic of study, as was the modern emperor, at least as a symbol of fascism or the "emperor system" and all that had gone wrong in modern Japan. But the court's hazy inner centuries were off limits. As described by Takano Toshihiko in the afterword to his book *Kinsei Nihon no kokka kenryoku to shūkyō*, as late as the 1980s a typical response from older colleagues to his research was a bemused look and comment: "So you really are good at studying the emperors and shrines, aren't you?" as if it were too difficult to believe.[17]

While scholars in Japan worked to discover and define the medieval era's feudal history according to Marxist theory, a small but growing number of historians in the West likewise viewed the period in terms of feudalism, albeit not through Marxist eyes, but as a development parallel to what had occurred in Western Europe. For both groups, the rise of the warriors and the courts they established were a critical part of this process, but the imperial court was a tangential factor at best. Although the court was ignored by most historians, some wondered if perhaps it maintained significance as a religious or symbolic center. These were, however, just speculations; no serious research to address the questions was undertaken.

Outside Japan, the focus on warriors received impetus through the scholarship of John Whitney Hall, the most influential historian working on the pre-Tokugawa period. Hall's interest was institutional history, something that allowed limited space for the medieval court. And yet, as Hall and his students dug deeper into the sources, they began to question the feudal paradigm, beginning with that of the earliest centuries. Early scholarship in English that provided nuance to the picture while grounding the imperial court firmly in the Kamakura period included essays by G. Cameron Hurst ("The Kōbu Polity: Court–Bakufu Relations in Kamakura Japan") and Cornelius Kiley ("The Imperial Court as a Legal Authority in the Kamakura Age").

Assiduous though most postwar historians were at ignoring Japan's imperial court of the late medieval era (1334–1600), change began to come in the 1970s. The rapid growth of the professional academy that came with higher education booms in Japan and the United States brought many more scholars into the field of premodern Japanese studies; and as scholarly production increased, historians invariably moved into new areas of research and reconsidered old assumptions. A primary topic of research in the late 1970s and 1980s was the establishment of the early modern regime, with Toyotomi Hideyoshi's land survey of the 1590s receiving the bulk of the attention in Japan. As scholars worked to flesh out the larger picture, to explain the shift to the early modern world in comprehensive terms, they soon realized they needed to find a place for the imperial court. Where, they asked, did it fit in the larger scheme of things? And what did it mean for the rising warriors and new hegemons? Given its significant place in the sources of the

era, it was clear that the court could not merely be dismissed as irrelevant; it had to be explained.

The fact was, however, that no one at the time was actually interested in the late medieval or early modern court itself. It existed in the minds of scholars only as an entity within a warrior-framed world. In this world, both discourse and practice were set by the warriors, and neither emperor nor courtiers were actors; instead they were puppets that the warriors manipulated. And this they did with remarkable skill and ingenuity, "using" the court to establish their legitimacy and extend their hegemony. Asao Naohiro argued that this was important in controlling both commoners and warriors:

> It was a powerful device for the *bushi* to be able to portray their control over the peasants in terms of rank and title deriving from the imperial court, although it was also essential to be able to invoke the authority of the shogun as commander of all warrior groups.[18]

Others maintained that the usurpation of abstract authority was matched by warrior appropriation of practical court powers. According to Fujiki Hisashi, this occurred as Oda Nobunaga arbitrated disputes between members of the elite, specifically the Kyoto nobility and the religious establishment, and "institutionaliz[ed] his material participation in the court's judicial proceedings." In doing so, he "whittled away" the court's "few remaining discretionary powers."[19] A final historiographic approach was one that emphasized the concept of *kōgi*, or the "public interest," and the way that warriors presented themselves as both the proponents and embodiment of this term. As argued by Fukaya Katsumi, the warriors were able to appropriate *kōgi* from the court, thereby elevating themselves to a position of power while leaving the emperor and his associates with none. In this he agreed with Fujiki, who concluded that as a result of these skillful manipulations by the warriors, "the highest traditional authority—imperial sovereignty—was shaken in its foundations."[20]

These arguments were laid out forcefully in English translation in an essay collection entitled *Japan Before Tokugawa*, published in 1981. And they soon found their way into publications by scholars outside Japan. The core of the argument was well put by Neil McMullin in his assessment of Oda Nobunaga: "The reason why Nobunaga secured and restored the position of the emperor to the degree he did was that he wanted to use the emperor, as Wakita Osamu says, as his 'tool'."[21] Finally, as Herman Ooms made clear, the three unifiers could do no wrong in their grand scheme to denigrate the court and elevate themselves: "Ieyasu also, after increasing his symbolic capital through the acceptance of court ranks, title, and office, increased it even further by severing himself and, step by step, the whole warrior authority structure from the court."[22]

By the mid-1980s, this view of the unifiers and court had been repeated and rephrased so often that it seemed well on its way to becoming a permanent fixture in the historiography. But the reality was that it was an argument without much foundation. To begin with, it completely ignored the court, presenting it and its members as lifeless. An outsider to the field could only assume that this was a reflection of the evidence, but that was hardly the case. Second, it ignored the abundant sources for the period, many of which were produced by courtiers and which provided rich insights into emperor and court as well as the warriors. Third, in order to make the warriors' appropriation of court powers truly meaningful, as befitted hegemons, historians had had to rehabilitate the court, giving it authority and powers that historians long before had shown it had lost. Because it was difficult to find many court powers worth taking, historians turned to ideas such as symbolic capital and cultural capital, concepts that required less hard evidence to support. As cogently stated by Ike Susumu in his criticism of this argument,

> Scholars argued from the premise that emperor and court were bound to continue and that ultimate political supremacy lay with them. They thus ignored actual relationships and based their claims on random guesses. Hence the illusion was born that the greatest test case for warrior government lay fully with the decision either to reject or submit to the emperor's authority.[23]

When the shift in scholarship on the late medieval court finally came, it was sudden and far-reaching. There were hints of a change in the early 1980s, but it was at the end of the decade—coinciding by chance with the death of Emperor Hirohito—that a flood of new work appeared. And in almost every way it was different from scholarship that preceded it: first, the court was made a viable topic of study, whether as a political institution, a social body, a center of art and culture, or a power within the *kenmon* (elite) structure; moreover, scholarship was no longer concerned just with a few key turning points, such as the transition to early modern rule, or upon relations with the warriors; second, historians at last began to make use of the numerous and rich courtier diaries of the period, as well as noble house documents and other sources; third, scholarship was generally narrow and rigorous; broader arguments would follow, but there was clearly a new concern for hard evidence.

A listing of a handful of the many articles produced by Japanese scholars during these years (most during the 1990s) provides an idea of the wealth and diversity of new research (here I provide just English translations of the titles; see the References section for the original Japanese): Tomita Masahiro, "The Muromachi Shoguns and the Emperor"; Tomita Masahiro, "Edicts of the Retired Emperor and Emperor in the Period following the Kakitsu Incident [1441]"; Yoshino Fusae, "Palace Women in the Muromachi Era"; Yukawa Toshiharu, "The Konoe Family Estate of Usaka, Echizen Province"; Okuno Takahiro, "Imperially Commissioned Temples and Priestly Robes"; Itō Masako, "Courtiers in the Provinces during the Sengoku Era"; Ike Susumu, "A Reconsideration of the Practice of Granting Court Ranks to Warriors"; Hashimoto Masanobu, "Yamashina Tokitsugu's Activities Around the Time of Nobunaga's March on Kyoto"; Hashimoto Masanobu, "Chancellor Konoe Sakihisa's Flight from Kyoto"; Tachibana Kyōko, "Concerning the Recommendation that Nobunaga be Appointed to One of Three Offices [grand chancellor, chancellor, or shogun]"; Tachibana Kyōko, "The Honnōji Incident and the Court."

Each of these essays shed considerable light on the activities and influence of the court during the late medieval and *sengoku* eras. For example, Okuno's piece on "imperially commissioned temples" (*chokuganji*) showed how court authority grew in the sixteenth century as temples increasingly sought this designation from the emperor, with the rights and protections that came with that (and for which they paid considerable sums). The studies by Hashimoto Masanobu addressed narrower issues, including Yamashina Tokitsugu's skillful negotiations with (if not manipulation of) Ashikaga Yoshiaki at the time of Oda Nobunaga's 1568 march into Kyoto, and Konoe Sakihisa's extensive political and military activities, such as his part in the "anti-Nobunaga league." For her part, Tachibana Kyōko was able to show that it was highly likely that Nobunaga was the one who recommended that the court offer him one of three high offices, and more controversially, that the court may have had a role in the Honnōji Incident, which resulted in Nobunaga's death.

This explosion of research revealed not just how fully earlier scholars had ignored the court and the sources concerning it, but also how sharply and quickly scholars had begun to rethink the assumptions of previous decades. The range of topics also made clear that the sources allowed research from many angles. Court relations with warriors was one significant trend, but by no means the dominant one. The court itself—as well as individuals, families, and groups within it—was a viable and meaningful topic of study.

In English, my own work dealt with many of these topics, both in integrative form in my book *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan, 1467–1680: Resilience and Renewal* (2002), as well as in narrower studies, "The Way of Yin and Yang: A Tradition Revived, Sold, Adopted" (1996); and "Tokugawa Ieyasu's Regulations for the Court: A Reappraisal" (1994). The former article deals with court practitioners of *onmyōdō*, the struggles they went through during the *sengoku* era, their eventual revival (and the revival of their art at court) late in the period, and then the adoption of many of their practices (and practitioners) by the early Tokugawa shoguns. Here we see how the new warrior leaders turned to the court for precedent and legitimacy as they established their rule. It is a theme that shows up elsewhere as well in the new scholarship, revealing that the unifiers and their associates were less innovative and less dismissive of the past than often shown to be; in fact, they appear to have generally embraced the past and the imperial institution that so profoundly represented that past.

The same idea shows up in my article on the regulations Ieyasu prepared for the court, as the third unifier comes across as intent not on restricting and defining the court to fit his new order but in seeing the court restored to a proper condition, stable and dignified. Like other "new" scholars of the court, I examined not just the immediate evidence—in this case the several codes drawn up by Ieyasu—but also the context and background. Among other things, this led me to argue that two sets of regulations attributed to Ieyasu by earlier historians, and said to be steps in constricting the court, were not produced by him. Such critical re-readings of the evidence has been a common part of recent scholarship on the court.

Of course, the new group of scholars working on the late medieval and reunification court during the 1990s (and now into the early twenty-first century) were by no means in agreement on all points, unified though they might have been in recognizing the court as an integral part of the era's political, social, and cultural order. The biggest points of contention revolved around the biggest questions, namely: Why did the court survive the late medieval period, a time when it easily could have been, indeed by all indications should have been, done away with? And what larger significance did the court have during this period, particularly in shaping Japan's political world—in other words, why did it matter? Neither of these questions is easily answered, and those desiring or demanding straightforward, single-piece explanations are bound to be disappointed. Nevertheless, the extensive scholarship produced during the past quarter-century offers many clues. While it was particularly difficult to understand the court's survival when scholars assumed that it and its members were passive, non-acting entities, once new research revealed the extent of court and courtiers' activities, and the strong pull of the court on the rising warriors, much of the mystery disappeared. The same was true on the question of why the court mattered.

One of the more successful efforts to address the broader questions directly is Wakita Haruko's lengthy article "Sengokuki ni okeru tennō ken'i no fujō" ("The Emergence of the Emperor's Authority in the Sengoku Era"). Although her larger argument—that during *sengoku* the emperor became the main symbol opposing chaos and the division of power—seems overdrawn, her narrower points—that court authority was reflected in its ability to grant aristocratic ranks and titles, make priestly appointments, designate temples as imperially commissioned institutions, and act as arbiters of culture—speak to the continued, even increasing, relevance of the court, even if the powers it held were hardly of the sort to bring stability to the political order.

A recent work that takes a different approach to the big questions is Thomas Conlan's *From Sovereign to Symbol: An Age of Ritual Determinism in Fourteenth-Century Japan*. In both its emphasis and its arguments this work is distinctive. To begin with, it deals with the court in the fourteenth century rather than the fifteenth and sixteenth, which have received much of the attention. Next, at the core of its analysis is religion, in particular the place of Shingon Buddhist ritual at court, a

welcome and understudied topic. And finally, this is a book that attempts to radically reinterpret the court (and indeed the whole of the fourteenth century)—though ironically that reinterpretation does little to force us to rethink the imperial institution more broadly since it presents these developments as a sharp disjuncture from what preceded and followed.

In *From Sovereign to Symbol*, Conlan portrays a court not in eclipse (as commonly interpreted) but instead at the center of the most important debates and developments of the era. At the fore were questions of sovereignty and political authority, matters which encompassed both court and warriors. The key figures in these developments were Shingon Buddhist monks such as Kenshun and Kōzei, imperial advisors who came to dominate the court as "masters of ritual." Their influence, however, did not stop at the boundaries of the court, and it was not merely symbolic or intellectual. Indeed, the ritual order these men created "determined the parameters of politics and the process of change in fourteenth and fifteenth century Japan."[24] What Conlan asks us to believe, as summed up in the book's subtitle, is that the historical complexities of the age were subsumed within the wake of "ritual determinism."[25]

These are large claims, and more than a few historians have disputed them.[26] On the one hand, Mikael Adolphson contends that Conlan's argument is compromised by his failure to consider the issues holistically, leading him to "selectively use and over-emphasize evidence in favor of the new narrative,"[27] something reflected in Conlan's dismissal of Zen Buddhism's well-documented significance as well as his decision to ignore the impetus for change effected by warriors. On the other hand, Brian Ruppert argues that

> there simply is no evidence that ritual itself changed dramatically in the period—the efforts of figures like Monkan and then Kenshun seem to have simply been those of monks who took advantage of their ritual knowledge to ingratiate themselves with elites.[28]

And it is true that Conlan offers very little discussion of the rituals themselves or why and in what ways they were recognized by emperors and others as particularly powerful at this time. Despite Conlan's repeated assertions that "Shingon Buddhist ritual became the language of power itself," or that ritual was "the very essence of power," convincing evidence for that is thin.[29]

As provocative as *From Sovereign to Symbol* is, few historians will be comfortable with an argument that ascribes to ritual the extensive powers and influence (let alone "deterministic" pull) Conlan claims it to have had in the fourteenth century. That certain emperors were under the sway of monks and their secret rituals is not difficult to imagine, but to show that ritual changed the course of history and took precedence over matters military and economic, for example, is another matter.

For future research

In the preface to his *Japan to 1600*, William Wayne Farris states that "sources are plentiful for Japan to 1600, perhaps even more so than for medieval Europe." Farris does not say what he bases this upon, but it seems a reasonable claim, since primary material on medieval Japan is certainly abundant, even for periods like *sengoku*, which saw the destruction of more than a few large written collections (such as those of Enryakuji at Mt. Hiei) along with institutions that produced and housed them. Of course, the sources do not always speak to the questions historians ask, nor are they rich for all topics, such as the lives of common people—but this is assuredly not a problem for research on the court and its members. Moreover, in contrast to forty or fifty years ago, the number of documents and diaries that have been transcribed and published has expanded dramatically, making sources much more accessible than in the past. Now one can easily find printed

collections of court documents, house and temple records, and aristocratic diaries, the main sources for the medieval period.[30]

Another cache of primary sources for the period is *Dai Nihon shiryō*, the sixteen-part series that chronicles Japan's history day-by-day from the ninth to nineteenth centuries. This vast collection of sources was begun late in the nineteenth century with the object of continuing the official histories of the classical period. Accordingly, the imperial court and its activities make up a major thread of the collection, as do events and developments that shaped government and rulership.

What, then, are fruitful topics for new scholarship, or particularly promising avenues of research? The possibilities are numerous, but a few I would suggest are the following (with recommendations based in part on holes in the broader field, inclusive of work in Japan, and also based on the state of scholarship outside of Japan).

First, the economics of court families begs for attention. Work in English is particularly thin, leaving us with the simplistic picture of declining revenue and confiscated land. That no doubt occurred over the course of the medieval era, but without close studies we are left in the dark as to the workings and significance of court families' estates (*shōen*)—either during the Kamakura era, when their position in the broader economy was large, or later, when they were at the center of disputes over power and the control of landed wealth. Moreover, as revealed in studies by members of the Chūsei Kuge Nikki Kenkyūkai, research into the economics of *sengoku*-era courtiers—on topics ranging from building construction to *shōen* income and management—offer insights into matters as diverse as relations with the warriors, law and justice, and the social lives of courtiers.

Second, a promising avenue of research for the period is microhistory, based perhaps on an individual courtier's diary (though there are certainly other sources that could be the core of such a study). Excellent microhistories exist for comparable or slightly later periods in European and American history, work which, despite its limited focus, sheds considerable light on the respective societies. It is an approach whose time is past due for premodern Japan. Several diaries among the many that seem well suited for this are *Kanmon Nikki* of prince Fushiminomiya Sadafusa (also known as Go-Sukōin; diary: 1416–1452); *Tokitsunekyōki* of the mid-level courtier Yamashina Tokitsune (diary: 1576–1608); and *Oyudononoue no nikki* (1477–1625, 1683–1826) the diary kept by a succession of women serving in the imperial palace.[31] Each of these could offer insights into a particular time period and social circle, considerably enriching the field. *Tokitsunekyōki*, one of a succession of diaries kept by the Yamashina house, could also be analyzed as part of a family history, a topic that has received very little attention.

Third, as suggested by my inclusion of *Oyudononoue no nikki* in the preceding section, another possibility for research is to consider issues well beyond politics and high culture, including, for example, gender and medicine, areas represented in English by the pioneering research of Hitomi Tonomura and Andrew Goble respectively. Goble's work on the physician Yamashina Tokitsune is particularly fruitful in revealing courtiers' connections beyond the *kenmon* elite, something appropriate to this era of increased social mobility and growing cultural integration.[32]

In sum, my recommendations for new work point to narrowly defined research into the lives and activities of courtiers (and their families), male and female, drawing upon the numerous sources they produced, and placing them (whether as outsiders—"above the clouds"—or insiders—caught up in mundane affairs) within the broader culture of Japan at the time. At the heart of such scholarship lies detailed reading and analysis of the sources, the key to this work.

Notes

1 Joyce Ackroyd, tr., *Lessons from History: Arai Hakuseki's Tokushi Yoron*. For the Japanese, see *Tokushi yoron*, in *Arai Hakuseki*.
2 Quoted in Kate Wildman Nakai, *Shogunal Politics*, 337.
3 For an English translation of this text, see H. Paul Varley, *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns: Jinnō Shōtōki of Kitabatake Chikafusa*; and for the Japanese, *Jinnō shōtōki*, in *Jinnō shōtōki, Masukagami*.
4 Richard Ponsonby-Fane, *The Imperial House of Japan*.
5 Ben-Ami Shillony, *Enigma of the Emperors*, 273.
6 H. Paul Varley, *Imperial Restoration in Medieval Japan*; Andrew Edmund Goble, *Kenmu: Go-Daigo's Revolution*.
7 The argument that medieval Japan began in the fourteenth century—which is compelling in many but not all respects—is fleshed out in Jeffrey Mass, *The Origins of Japan's Medieval World*.
8 Reinhard Zollner, "The Sun Also Rises." Also see the reviews by Borgen, Ruttermann, and Steenstrup, noted in the References list.
9 Imatani Akira, "Not for Lack of Will or Wile," 48. In Japanese, see Imatani Akira, *Muromachi no ōken: Ashikaga Yoshimitsu no ōken sandatsu keikaku*.
10 Amino lays out the case for this in his *Chūsei tennōsei to hi-nōgyōmin* ("The Medieval Emperor System and Non-Farming Commoners").
11 Kondō Shigekazu, "Chūsei ōken," 20.
12 Imatani's emphasis upon the singular place of the emperor is reinforced by his use of the term *tennōsei*, or "emperor system." Coined as a pejorative by Japanese communists in the prewar era to describe the system and ideology that sustained elite rule, the word was used loosely by scholars in the postwar era as well, regardless of the period they studied. The implication was that the system was brutal and repressive. Imatani's use of the term clearly dates him, as younger scholars have abandoned it as simplistic and essentialist.
13 *Tateri Munetsugu monjo* (1937).
14 Yoshikawa Teijirō, "Nobunaga no kinnō."
15 Tsuji Zennosuke, *Kōshitsu to Nihon seishin*.
16 Of course, emperors and courtiers did not function outside the framework of class conflict, as evidenced by their control of lands within the *shōen* system. But in concentrating on the rise of the warriors, historians of the late medieval era in particular tended to give limited space to the Kyoto elite, despite their continuing significance as estate holders.
17 Takano Toshihiko, *Kinsei Nihon no kokka kenryoku to shūkyō*, 316.
18 Asao Naohiro, "Shogun and Tennō," 253.
19 Fujiki Hisashi, "The Political Posture of Oda Nobunaga," 177.
20 Fukaya Katsumi, "Bakuhansei kokka to tennō"; Fujiki, "Political Posture," p. 182.
21 Neil McMullin, *Buddhism and the State in Sixteenth-Century Japan*, 79.
22 Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570–1680*, 168–169.
23 Ike Susumu, "Buke to tennō," 23.
24 Thomas Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol: An Age of Ritual Determinism in Fourteenth Century Japan*, 13.
25 This is the main argument of the book, but there are certainly other problematic issues historians need to consider: 1) the meaning (and relevance) of "sovereignty"; 2) claims about the "destruction of precedent"; 3) the idea that much about Japan's fourteenth century (most obviously in terms of the court and religion) was different from centuries that preceded and followed; 4) the notion of "Shingon mimesis" to which Conlan ascribes considerable importance, arguing for example that "[Ashikaga] Yoshimitsu, by behaving 'as if' he were a sovereign (*chiten no kimi*), had, according to Shingon mimesis, in fact already become one" (173).
26 The most incisive reviews, each of which analyzes the book from a different vantage point, are those of Mikael Adolphson, Robert Borgen, Joan Piggott, and Brian Ruppert. See complete references in the References list.
27 Mikael Adolphson, "Review of Thomas Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*," 105.
28 Brian Ruppert, "Review of Thomas Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*," 390.
29 Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, 17; 15.
30 See Iikura, *Nihonshi shōhyakka, kokiroku*, for a brief introduction to diaries and related records of the classical and medieval eras. Iikura includes publication information, where relevant, though the list of works in print has increased since this book was published in 1998.

31 Go-Sukōin, *Kanmon nikki*; Yamashina Tokitsune, *Tokitsunekyō-ki*; *Oyudononoue no nikki*.
32 Andrew Goble, "Rhythms of Medicine and Community in Late Sixteenth Century Japan: Yamashina Tokitsune (1543–1611) and His Patients." For a representative work by Hitomi Tonomura, see "Coercive Sex in the Medieval Japanese Court: Lady Nijō's Memoir." Also, see my article, " 'Washing Off the Dust': Baths and Bathing in Late Medieval Japan," for another study that addresses social mobility and cultural integration of which the nobility was a part.

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11
The sixteenth century
Identifying a new group of "unifiers" and reevaluating the myth of "reunification"

Jeff Kurashige

On a rainy summer afternoon in AD 1560, roughly 2,000 warriors of Oda Nobunaga's army attacked a massive force, supposedly numbering 25,000 men, led by Imagawa Yoshimoto in what has come to be known as the battle of Okehazama. Thanks to a lightning assault, Nobunaga's army routed the much larger group, and according to popular historiography, shifted the momentum of the Sengoku period (*c.*1470–1600). Suddenly Nobunaga's star was on the rise, while the great house of Imagawa fell toward ruin.

It would not be inappropriate to say that the second decade of the twenty-first century has seen a similarly sudden and abrupt reversal in the fortunes of Sengoku history, with numerous young scholars now directing their attention to the sixteenth century. The goal of this chapter, then, is to describe this rapid transformation—this Okehazama of late medieval scholarship.[1] I will examine the progress of research to date, focusing on work published in English and Japanese, describe how these studies have changed our understanding of medieval Japan, and outline the key questions historians of the period must consider in the future.

The trends in Sengoku era studies in a post-Smith world

In 1981, Bardwell Smith published a bibliographic essay aimed at assessing the state of the field.[2] Smith's greatest contribution here was his examination of the work of the pioneers of premodern history like John W. Hall and Asakawa Kan'ichi, along with a demonstration of the far-reaching impact each had on later scholars. Nevertheless, over three decades have passed since this publication and the focus of research on the Sengoku period has changed dramatically. Furthermore, with the loss of scholars like Nagahara Keiji, the identity of the field itself has shifted. This section will thus examine changing trends in Sengoku scholarship, focusing on the new generation that has attempted to shoulder the burden borne so well by the founders of the field.

Until at least the 1970s, historians of premodern Japan were bound to a feudal paradigm, forced onto Japanese history by a perceived need to justify research in Western terms. In the 1980s, Hall grappled with the legacy of feudalism that he and Edwin Reischauer, among others, had built during the early postwar era, when studies of premodern Japan had to be justified in terms of Western constructs. His "Terms and Concepts in Japanese Medieval History" argued against "applying the label of 'feudal society' " to Japan, and contended that a "greater and greater

skepticism regarding its use to explain Japanese history" was building among both Japanese and Western scholars.[3]

Hall and others questioned the paradigm's appropriateness since such terms often obscure more than they reveal, and thereby limit their usefulness to readers. Since then, however, Japanese studies has become more self-confident. "Japanologists," narrowly focused on writing for one another, have been replaced by "historians of Japan," engaging the discourse with historians working on other regions and eras.

Scholarship on medieval European history provides a useful comparative example of a transition in emphasis. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed a change in focus from institutional to social history. Similarly, gender history came to the fore in the 1990s. These developments represented a dramatic shift from the study of elites to research on the lives of ordinary men and women. A similar trend occurred in the scholarship on Sengoku era Japan, although at a slightly later date.

Institutional and political history dominated period scholarship on the Age of the Country at War into the 1980s (and arguably never faded from prominence in Japanese-language research on the period). Studies like Mary Elizabeth Berry's *Hideyoshi* kept a close eye on explaining the rise of the modern state, while economic history also remained a major theme, with translated works by Japanese historians garnering much attention in the field.[4] These focuses shifted in the 1990s. The total number of articles and books published remained roughly of the same level as in the 1980s, yet work on political institutions and warrior elites was superseded by an increased focus on religious groups and gender (see Chapters 18 and 21 of this volume). Cultural and social history also received new attention. Studies dealing with tea and painting remained common, but a new interest in the lives of common folk gained momentum as well.

The latter half of the first decade of the twenty-first century saw increased geopolitical tensions in Asia, which were reflected in a blossoming of scholarship examining the historic dynamics of the relationship between Japan and the continent. For example, studies dealing with *wako* "pirates" (or more appropriately "sea lords," to borrow Peter Shapinsky's term) and traders illustrated both the tensions (in Shapinsky's case)—or lack thereof (in Amino Yoshihiko's)—between "states" like imperial China and *daimyō* domains.[5] Simultaneously, they also illuminated the hybrid nature, ethnical or national, of many historic figures who served as bridges between the two cultural spheres. Most importantly, these kinds of works have forced scholars to look beyond traditional boundaries, such as state lines or even geographic barriers, and reassess our ideas of continuity and rupture.

In a parallel trend, the growth of Japan's soft power in the form of *anime* and *otaku* culture has encouraged historians to reflect upon our own frequent lionization of *daimyō*. Popular culture has, to be sure, focused on an idealized image of the Sengoku lord. Nevertheless, as Ikegami Hiroko acknowledged in an interview for the *Tokyo Shinbun* in 2013, even scholars too often glorify warriors who were often morally little better than butchers or thugs.[6]

Leading this effort to reshape our understanding of fifteen- and sixteenth-century Japan is a cadre of junior scholars who have collectively reinvigorated the field. These historians have been particularly active in investigating the newer strands of research that followed trends in world historiography and gained popularity in the 1990s. Peter Shapinsky has already been mentioned above, but another noteworthy figure is David Spafford. His *A Sense of Place* focuses upon regional identity and the "persistent medieval" (a term that he defines as "a conservatism and … inertia that [were] everywhere in the texts but … often go unacknowledged") within the Kantō, thereby challenging the unifier-centric focus of previous Sengoku research.[7] Of particular interest is his depiction of the many lords in eastern Japan, who tried to resurrect older practices and institutions, including the late classical era *shōen* system. Other important newcomers to the field include Morgan Pitelka, who has explored the culture of tea, and Lee Butler, who has examined

Muromachi era spiritual beliefs and cultural habits.[8] A primary goal of this new generation of scholars has been to free themselves from this "teleology of unification," and emphasize how groups, regions, or sub-eras previously considered peripheral to an understanding of the Sengoku period should be focused upon as equally important in understanding its fundamental nature.[9]

Evaluating recent trends in Japanese scholarship

In the early 2000s, a group of young Japanese scholars undertook the task of synthesizing research trends in Sengoku studies, resulting in a volume called *Muromachi Sengoku-ki kenkyū o yominaosu* (hereafter *Yominaosu*).[10] This landmark study is divided into four broad sections examining political (more than half the text), social, economic, and religious history. In particular, the relationship between the court and shogunate, and theoretical frameworks of institutional history elucidating the Muromachi-to-Sengoku and Sengoku-to-Shokuhō (the era of Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi) transitions are evaluated at length. The questions of where to place the Age of the Country at War relative to the medieval and early modern periods, and whether it was simply a transitionary period or something more, receive special attention in the book. Representative of the major methodological difference between English-language and Japanese-language studies, the chapters focus on individual research frameworks or foci (*-ron* in Japanese), rather than the thematic or narrative approaches that tend to dominate scholarship in the West.

While the bibliographies in this volume are comparatively limited when juxtaposed against those found in English-language publications, *Yominaosu* still offers newcomers to the field the best overview published to date of the direction(s) in which scholarship has developed. Unfortunately, research published outside Japan was largely ignored. And while *Yominaosu* deserves to be explored in its entirety due to its exhaustive evaluations of past historiography, its essays make assumptions about readers' knowledge of the field that render it less than accessible to non-specialists.[11]

The initial political history section of *Yominaosu* is divided into two parts examining first the relationship between the court and shogunate, and second regional institutional history. Matsunaga Kazuhiro begins the former by defining the "paradigm of the relationship between the shogunate and court" (*kōbu kankei-ron*), which focuses on the political history of the apex of the traditional elite from the start to end of the Muromachi period.[12] While he calls attention to other players, such as the temple or aristocratic members of the *kenmon*, he argues that the field has largely deemphasized their roles in the governmental system.[13] Matsunaga identifies the Nanbokuchō period (1334–1392) as the point at which state authority transferred from the court to the shogunate, and suggests that the consensus view is of a unified polity in which shogunate and court jointly managed state organs. In essence, he says, a new diarchy, similar to what existed throughout the Kamakura era, was reconstituted. In contrast to the more or less equal roles of the two players under the Kamakura system, however, the Muromachi polity placed the court marginally below the shogunate in real power. But Momosaki Yuichirō, following Matsunaga in the same section, argues that the diarchy had died and the age of warriors clearly arrived by the time of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, by which point the shogunate had absorbed all court functions.[14]

Matsunaga's survey is useful since questions regarding the applicability of Kuroda's *kenmon taisei* remain among many historians focusing on Sengoku history, in particular those who follow Nagahara's models, which prioritize economic methods of analyzing history. Momosaki's examination of the scholarship also proves useful for its analysis of past Japanese research, but its real focus is more toward the mid-Muromachi period than the Sengoku period. Both scholars do demonstrate however, that even within these broad paradigms, Japanese historians pull the theoretic narrative in various directions (as is the case in each of the following sections of this

volume), suggesting that true consensus remains far off. We cannot say, for example, that all Sengoku histories remain colored by Marxist thinking, and assume that the nuances within these disagreements are moot.

The second half of the section on political history shifts from the macro toward the micro, and centers on the *shugo*, the ties between the *shugo* and the shogunate, local warrior lords, and the polities of Nobunaga and Hideyoshi. Yamada Tōru begins this portion of the text by emphasizing how disunity and a lack of standardization characterized the Muromachi era even during the most influential days of the Ashikaga shogunate.[15] *Shugo*, he cautions, were varied in power and scope, and a definitive definition of the group's characteristics remains elusive. Despite these limitations however, Yamada identifies how many medieval scholars have used the political rise of the *shugo* order (in contrast to their relative lack of influence during the Kamakura period) as a window to view the solidification of the Muromachi polity and the foundation of local autonomy so critical to an understanding of the Sengoku period. Through this focus, Yamada argues that the study of *shugo* shifted the field toward an appreciation of local history, away from a fixation on the center in the form of the shogunate itself and other capital authorities. The emphasis on the ties between authority (*kenryoku-ron*) and regional society (*chiiki shakai-ron*) were derivative of these *shugo* studies.

Yoshida Kenji provides a counter-balance to Yamada, tracking the evolution of scholarship that illuminates the establishment of power by the Muromachi shogunate itself.[16] Yoshida describes how recent research criticizes the focus on the triumvirate of shogunate-*shugo-kokujin* as a ruling stratum (the *Muromachi bakufu-shugo taisei-ron*), and instead posits that the field now emphasizes the tensions between the central authorities (in the form of the shogunate trying to draw local authority toward it), the local authorities (such as the *kokujin* attempting to resist those authorities), and the *shugo* as a mediating middle ground. Yoshida argues, however, that this paradigm may well be too limited, as it fails to account for northern Japan, the Kantō, and Kyushu, among other locations. Moreover, even identifying who truly had *shugo* authority and the actual parameters of that authority, remains a matter of debate. For example, there are questions about the degree to which the early Mogami in northern Japan had the legal authority of *shugo*, even without formal titles such as *Ōshu Kanrei*. As a result of these studies, however, Yoshida suggests the field has moved beyond a dynamic of center *versus* periphery, and moved to see the pattern of center *and* periphery as the key to understanding the Sengoku era as a whole.

Hirade Masanori builds on Yoshida's survey, moving from the Muromachi through to the post-Ōnin War period.[17] Yet unlike the previous two scholars, he highlights the central position the *daimyō* themselves occupy in many historians' narratives (*Sengoku-ki seiji-kenryoku-ron*). Like Yamada, he describes how Sengoku scholars largely see an existing "polity system" that spanned from northern Kyushu through to the southern portion of the Tohoku region, with the areas outside that sphere being a different beast. Nevertheless, despite these broader patterns of rulership, Hirade, like Yamada, also stresses how the field has begun to highlight the variability between individual lords, and how difficult it is to use single *daimyō* as representative of a systemic whole. Furthermore, he argues that while there are researchers who emphasize the "medieval" or "unique" qualities of the *daimyō*, highlighting the connectivity between the lords and their early medieval predecessors (like the *shugo*) seems to be the greater trend in the field. In other words, continuities rather than ruptures are again the order of the day. Like Yamada's *shugo*, Hirade's *daimyō*, however, cannot be studies in isolation, but must rather be considered within nexuses of relationships between lower-level warriors and the heads of village collectives. Thus, the *daimyō* become a lens through which to see local and regional social relations, rather than centralized legal or infrastructural evolution.

Oshita Shigetoshi continues in much the same vein as Hirade, by questioning whether or not Nobunaga and Hideyoshi's rule represented something fundamentally different than what came

before, and whether the former was epitomized by the figure of the *shugo* or the *daimyō*.[18] He concludes that the field largely concurs on the existence of a system of single rulership at all levels of the polity (*isshiki shihai-ron*), rather than overlapping layers of control of the sort that predominated within the classical and early medieval *shōen* system.

The second part of *Yominaosu* turns to social history—or more accurately, to local-level institutional history. Nishijima Tarō begins the section by illuminating the history of local lordship and the rise of the independent *kokujin* lords that formed the retainer corps of the *sengoku daimyō*.[19] He contends that this local stratum of power holds the key to understanding the means by which *daimyō* expanded their authority.

The last two chapters in the section cover more readily recognizable topics of social history. Shimizu Katsuyuki argues that social history only began to attract significant academic attention in Japan during the 1980s and 1990s, and remains an underdeveloped approach to Sengoku studies.[20] Here Shimizu makes a welcome nod to comparative history and methodology, categorizing a number of European sociological methodologies or schools organized by country, and listing which Japanese scholars have followed each school. Shimizu also characterizes social history as the great bridge in Sengoku studies, by which scholars have been able to pursue collaborative research with historians dealing with other eras, such as the Edo period, and move beyond the questions of the ties between rulers and ruled that characterized the legal history of the 1980s, to take up topics as diverse as the availability of information, famines, demographics, human trafficking, and village history. Social history, according to Shimizu, thus represents the freest or most flexible of the fields of study in Sengoku history, offering the possibility of international or interdisciplinary investigation, and also the greatest breadth in terms of temporal scope of eras evaluated. Despite the effort Shimizu dedicates to tracking the sub-field (and his own obvious interest in it) he describes with regret how the "word" *shakai-shi* (social history) is a "term" that he no longer hears uttered, suggesting that despite its value and underdeveloped nature, interest by field historians has moved on.[21]

And finally, Mieda Akiko offers an analysis of status systems, and of groups at the bottom of the social hierarchy.[22] In parallel to Shimizu's views, Mieda believes that the heyday of this vein of social history was the 1970s and 1980s, and that it lost vitality from the 1990s onward. Part of the reason for this, she argues, is a lack of agreement on even what should be discussed, as definitions for social classes vary significantly. Mieda suggests that due to these problems, there remains fundamentally little explanation of the differences between groups in lower status persons from the Kamakura period through to the Sengoku era.

Despite a comparatively cold reception among some segments of the academic community (owing in part, perhaps, to the conspicuous absence of senior historians contributing to the project), *Muromachi Sengoku-ki kenkyū o yominaosu* symbolizes the continued interest in the field, and provides a valuable portal into recent Japanese scholarship.[23] As Ikegami Hiroko described in 2013, not only do professional historians still flock to the field, but a new boom has begun as *rekijo* (young women, often in their teens, who are interested in the image—rather than the reality—of Sengoku figures) also scoop up many of the publications in Japan's bookstores. Ikegami and other scholars compare Prime Minister Abe Shinzō's use of power to that of Nobunaga, noting that even the realm of modern politics cannot escape the reach of Sengoku studies.

Landmark studies on the sixteenth century

Few historians of premodern Japan can come close to matching the impact on the field as a whole made by John W. Hall. I have already discussed his role in reevaluating the use of the feudal paradigm, but in addition to being an extremely productive researcher, Hall mentored a number of

other major figures in the field of Japanese history including Harold Bolitho, Harry Harootunian, and Jeffrey Mass. Hall also contributed to the field by describing the difficulties facing students of medieval history when attempting to understand the concepts and terms used in the scholarship. His "Terms and Concepts in Japanese Medieval History" still serves as an excellent guide when translating Japanese sources into English. Although Hall's original contributions to Sengoku studies slowed during the 1980s, he crafted an article on the Muromachi shogunate in the original *Cambridge History of Japan* series, which he co-edited.[24] The chapter foreshadowed trends that came to dominate subsequent Japanese-language historiography, as he described the need to view even the central government as an entity with multiple regional elements or characteristics, and thus highlighted the importance of integrating both center and periphery.

By the mid-1980s, the mantle of leading Sengoku-era historian had been assumed by Mary Elizabeth Berry. Her first book, *Hideyoshi*, focused on the second of the three late sixteenth-century unifiers, and the extent to which the legacy of this single man transformed the political order of Sengoku Japan. Berry's approach was, however, not a return to the "Great Man in History" line favored by earlier generations of historians. Rather, she argued that Hideyoshi forged a federalist order of *daimyō*, which she defines as "a union of semi-autonomous domains under an overseer of common interest." This focus on *daimyō* governance fit her work solidly within the institutional historiography that dominated the 1980s.[25]

Berry continued to define the field of Sengoku political history in the early 1990s, with her second book, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*, a masterwork that defies simple classification. Working against a background of the Ōnin War (1467–1477) and the political struggles among the *shugo-daimyō* factions, Berry deftly interwove descriptions of the ideologies and cultures of the capital into the narrative. Her descriptions of guilds and common folk offer a window into the economy and society of the Sengoku world as well.[26]

Late twentieth-century understanding of the Sengoku era outside Japan was also enhanced by translations of the contributions of Japanese researchers. The work of Nagahara Keiji, who mentored a new generation of historians in Japan, including Ike Susumu and Ikegami Hiroko, is particularly important. Published during the 1980s and 1990s, Nagahara's scholarship is notable not only for its brilliant conclusions but also for its strong internal logic and clarity of thought. While his research dealt primarily with the institutions of *daimyō* government, including the declining *shōen* system and the emerging *chigyō* system of direct land ownership, in which land rents and taxes were collected in cash or rice depending upon the area, Nagahara also explored such diverse topics as the origin of the *eta* and *hinin* outcastes, the idea of the *kōgi* or public authority, and the lives of Sengoku peasants.[27]

In the twenty-first century, an increasing number of junior historians vie for leadership of the field of political and institutional history. The work of this new generation of scholars—"unifiers" of premodern Japanese historiography if you will—explores political history from both the center and periphery, and represents a shift toward an increasingly balanced narrative that is more representative of the underlying historical realities.[28] David Spafford's work, described above, especially merits attention on this front, as he turns away from the traditionally unifier-centric narrative and emphasizes the regional variation along the road toward political centralization.

Paralleling the work of these historians focusing exclusively on Japan are the interregional studies from Korea specialists, such as Kenneth Robinson, who examines topics like Korean-Japanese trade and warfare, helping to create a more interdisciplinary and diverse field.[29] Whether or not one subscribes to Amino Yoshihiko's paradigm of a united premodern Asian cultural sphere, the large number of archaeological trade goods found across Japan demonstrate that we cannot ignore Japan's ties to the continent.[30] Comparative studies of politics paralleling

Robinson's work on trade and war may yet yield new perspectives on past research, or even direct us toward new queries.

Cultural and social history

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Barbara Ruch led a movement to banish the image of the Sengoku period as a dark age of degeneration and decline. Ruch highlighted the new forms of literature that emerged during the late Muromachi age, arguing that while scholars of literature had long dismissed these new genres as degenerative or vulgar—largely because they were produced for and enjoyed by commoners, as well as elites—historians should instead celebrate them as new forms of expression in which "themes, heroes and heroines, predicaments … unique to a given nation but which at the same time are not the product or property of … any one level of society" appeared for the first time in Japan.[31]

In their eagerness to explore downtrodden peasants and other hitherto under-examined areas of society, historians have allowed the imperial court (as distinct from the physical arena of the capital itself) to all but disappear from the historiographic dialogue. One notable exception, however, is Lee Butler, whose *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan, 1467–1680* demonstrated that the ascendancy of warriors to the height of economic and political prosperity did not eliminate the soft-power of the Kyoto nobility. Culture as dictated by the elites in the capital, he argued, still carried cachet in the minds of the rural warriors.[32]

In other work, Butler has contributed to the larger trend toward focus on non-elite layers of society. His 2005 article, "Washing Off the Dust," for example, discussed the origins of Japan's bathing culture. He pays particular attention to documenting the development of baths and the spread of their popularity from the nobility to warriors and commoners during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[33]

This theme of the high culture of court aristocrats and elite warriors defusing into the increasingly turbulent world of society at large has, in fact, become quite popular in the twenty-first century. Morgan Pitelka, for example, has authored a dozen articles on tea culture and edited books dealing with both tea and pottery.[34] While Pitelka pays particular attention to politically powerful tea consumers like Tokugawa Ieyasu, he also describes how elite tastes spread downward through society. Similarly, Morten Oxenboell's work on banditry and the turbulence found within the village offers a lens through which to examine local culture and society.[35]

Intellectual history

Scholars specializing in the Sengoku period—particularly those outside Japan—have largely ignored intellectual history as a field of inquiry. While studies of Tokugawa period ideology, science, education, and philosophy abound, Anglophone readers interested in late medieval developments in these subjects have little available to them beyond books aimed at popular audiences, most of which cite an amorphous notion of "Zen" as the key to any problem (one need but search websites like Amazon for books that include "Zen" in their titles to find multiple examples). Clearly increased efforts to clarify what beliefs were actually held by warriors and other elements of society are desperately needed today. The dearth of studies is surprising, as the topic would certainly be of interest to both the general public and to academia.

Eiko Ikegami's 1995 study of samurai honor, *The Taming of the Samurai*, offers some help here. Although Ikegami's focus is emphatically on Tokugawa period developments, she does offer the most comprehensive examination of samurai belief systems to date. Her work crafted a portrait of warriors focused on honor and individualism, manifesting most conspicuously in the idea of

jiriki kyūsai ("self-redress") during the Era of the Country at War. Ikegami contends, however, that this rugged individualism faced stern opposition from the *daimyō*, who attempted to "tame" their retainers through laws such as the *kenka ryōseibai*—a law that punished both parties equally during any conflict.[36] It bears mentioning however that the same principle was advanced by the Kamakura and Muromachi regimes as well, and thus was not so much something new as a reaffirmation of an older tradition.[37]

Somewhat similarly, Herman Ooms offers the most significant survey to date of sixteenth-century ideological developments as prelude to his 1985 study of early Tokugawa period intellectual discourse. Seeking to dismantle the notion, prevailing at the time he wrote, that the shogunate imposed a Neo-Confucian orthodoxy of thought during the early decades of the seventeenth century, Ooms revealed the prevalence of numerous competing ideologies during the waning years of the Age of the Country at War and into the beginning of the Edo period.[38]

It is unfortunate that, as Shimizu Katsuyuki lamented in *Yominaosu*, academic historians have shown so little recent interest in samurai intellectual history, leaving the field instead largely to amateur aficionados.[39] In light of the rising popularity of anime, and the accompanying interest in samurai culture, one cannot but hope that a new generation of scholars will wrest this field back from popular historians, who are more interested in retelling myth than in ascertaining fact.

Tools of the trade

One complication for foreigners attempting to read Japanese scholarship is its heavy use of specialist jargon. The definitions of many historical terms still remain topics of debate in Japanese scholarship.[40] How are we to come to grips with such words and their associated theoretical paradigms (*-ron* in Japanese)? Fortunately, a number of reference works are available to navigate this verbal maze, represented by *Nihon chūsei-shi kenkyū jiten* and *Nihon kinsei-shi kenkyū jiten*.[41] Although slightly dated, these dictionaries define terms and scholarly paradigms, and aim to reconcile differing viewpoints in the field. Even more usefully, they also list classic works that analyze these key concepts.

In addition to jargon, another issue facing historians reading Japanese scholarship is the lack of contextualization surrounding important individuals or locations. Although webpages profiling such persons or places proliferate, their reliability remains problematic. Researchers are still better served by dictionaries covering both national-level and provincial figures. The *Sengoku jinmei jiten* is arguably the most useful of the generalized texts. On the other hand, an extensive selection of regionally focused volumes is available as well. While such works tend to vary in quality, many are quite comprehensive, and often go beyond the scope of the title. Shimoyama Haruhisa's *Go-Hōjō-shi kashindan jinmei jiten*, for example, discusses many members of the Go-Hōjō family, in addition to the retainers (*kashindan*) of the *daimyō* promised by the title.[42]

Historians should also not ignore the value of encyclopedias of regional place names. Such works usually list the primary source documents in which names appear, and also often offer much needed background by chronicling events in nearby locales during the same era. Kadokawa's *Nihon chimei dai-jiten* is one such series.[43]

This wealth of secondary material obviously makes research easier, but at the end of the day exploration of primary sources represents the core of historical research. The hunt for such materials has also been facilitated by the compellation of documents centered on the themes of house and location. For those who research the Go-Hōjō, Imagawa, or Takeda houses, for example, the *Sengoku ibun* series provides near-complete collections of materials written both by *daimyō* and their retainers.[44] The *Sengoku ibun* also includes region-centered collections for the

Setonaikai and Bōsō Peninsula. It does not, however, include all regions in Japan or all *daimyō* houses. Thus, prefectural histories (*kenshi*) are often the only available source for primary data.

Caution is sometimes called for in dealing with such printed collections, however, inasmuch as compilers and transcribers frequently disagree over readings of particular characters. Whenever possible, therefore, researchers should cross-reference multiple printed transcriptions, or photographic reproductions, of important documents. A similar warning should be made about translations of primary sources—both translations into English and other Western languages, and translations into modern Japanese. While translations represent a convenient introductory source for undergraduate and even junior graduate students, the material remains at least one level removed from the original, and should be more properly viewed as an interpretation than as an original source.[45]

New directions for the field of Sengoku scholarship

As should be clear from the foregoing, much progress has been made since Bardwell Smith wrote his bibliographic essay in 1981. At the time my own survey of the historiography appeared in 2008, the field seemed largely dormant, but happily it has since revived rapidly. Even so, fundamental historiographic questions still need to be addressed by the English-language scholarship in each of the areas discussed above.

In the field of institutional history, what has been produced (collectively) outside Japan thus far is not so much a history of the Sengoku *daimyō* as a class, but a series of studies of the three unifiers (Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu). Beyond Peter Arnesen's work on the Ouchi (now nearly four decades old); John W. Hall's seminal *Government and Local Power*, focused on Bizen Province and including a look at the Ikeda; and my own dissertation, which examined the Go-Hōjō and Mōri, no one has investigated the structure of other late medieval *daimyō* houses to a significant degree (although one could argue that Shapinsky's Murakami "sealords" constituted *daimyō* houses as well).[46] The history of *daimyō* outside the Kinai and the Kantō basins remains underexplored.

Similarly, the question of regional differences broached by Nagahara Keiji still awaits an answer, although David Spafford has begun inquiries in this direction. The focus on local history in Japan bodes well for the eventual production of studies spanning broader regions as well, even though such syntheses or collaborative efforts are still all too rare. The rates and patterns of evolution of *daimyō* houses throughout the Age of the Country at War have not been addressed either. Were *daimyō* in the late 1400s and early 1500s significantly different from those who followed? Hall outlined the transition from *shugo-daimyō* to *sengoku-daimyō* and that of the unifiers to the early modern *daimyō*, but were there changes in the era before Nobunaga?[47] In other words, were all *sengoku daimyō* identical? The English-language literature offers no detailed answers to these questions, while the Japanese literature suggests differences but only a few overarching patterns.

The lack of comparative studies in Japanese-language literature also points toward this issue as one in need of elucidation. Part of the reason for the dearth of answers is that scholarship on the inner workings of the Sengoku domain governments remains scarce as well. For example, with the exception of my own dissertation, *daimyō* finances as an aspect of government policy have not been explored outside of Japan, and garner little attention today (trade and currency receiving arguably more attention).

Social and socio-cultural history are the newest fields to Sengoku history. Many topics need to be addressed, but in particular the issues of evolving class-consciousness beg for investigation—preferably by historians working outside the Marxist paradigm. In Japan, the issue of *heinō bunri*

(the government-enforced division of warriors from agriculturalists in both status and physical living space) has become a hotly debated topic among historians of the early modern period, but less so for medieval researchers. As Yoshida Yuriko described in 2004, some historians are now questioning the received wisdom that this famous separation of warriors from peasants—which dramatically shaped the social fabric of early modern Japan—originated with Toyotomi Hideyoshi, contending instead that it was merely the culmination of a process that began earlier, in various regions across the country.[48] These are questions that will help explain how to divide premodern from early modern, and also explore whether the Sengoku period was simply a transitional era, or an age distinct in its elements from both those before and after. Only by approaching these kinds of questions will we then be truly free from Spafford's "teleology of unification."

Conclusion

Scholarship on the Sengoku period continues to evolve rapidly both outside Japan and within. Fields like economic and political history may one day come to be eclipsed by cultural and gender history as the most popular subjects for exploration, recalling the pattern of development of studies on medieval Europe. Nevertheless, questions remain to be answered in all sectors of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century history if a fuller picture of the era is to be achieved.

At least, however, it is not difficult to echo Jeffrey Mass' optimism when he posited that Japanese medieval studies—and investigations into the Sengoku period in particular—will avoid "sinking into fixity."[49] The rise of Japan's soft-power in the form of anime and pop-culture that so often focus upon the Age of the Country at War has helped draw young blood into the field. Even if many of these scholars begin as "Sengoku groupies," like the *rekijo* described above, whose focus is more upon image than reality, it is not difficult to imagine more than a few eventually pursuing their interest in a more scholarly direction. Premodern historians dealing with both the Heian and Kamakura periods still remain more numerous in the field as a whole, but as noted earlier, the increase in scholars focusing upon the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries certainly is encouraging.

Returning to our initial image of Okehazama, let us hope that instead of a trend toward intellectual consolidation in a few field leaders parallel to the regional consolidation that followed the battle of 1560, rather a continued influx of new blood—and thus new ideas—into the field proves to be the new dynamic.

Notes

1 Oddly, no recent historian had provided a detailed synthesis of the existing English-language scholarship on Sengoku era studies until my own "Eikokuen ni okeru Nihon no Sengoku jidaishi kenkyū no kiseki to kadai" appeared in 2008. Because it was published in Japanese, however, the article failed to find a wide readership in the West.
2 Bardwell Smith, "Japanese Society and Culture in the Momoyama Era: A Bibliographic Essay."
3 John W. Hall, "Terms and Concepts in Japanese Medieval History: An Inquiry into the Problems of Translation." The quoted line appears on page 7. For additional discussions of the uses and abuses of the feudal paradigm in application to Japanese history, see Chapters 8 and 22 of this volume.
4 Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi*; Nagahara Keiji, "The Sengoku Daimyō and the Kandaka System."
5 Peter Shapinsky, *Lords of the Sea: Pirates, Violence, and Commerce in Late Medieval Japan*. The term is defined on page 13 of the text. Amino Yoshihiko, *Rethinking Japanese History*.
6 The interview appeared in Katsumata Hideki, "Ano hito ni semaru: Ikegami Hiroko rekishi gakusha."
7 David Spafford, *A Sense of Place: The Political Landscape in Late Medieval Japan*. The term is defined on page 12 of the text.

8 Butler, although best known for his work on more traditional institutional history—particularly his *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan, 1467–1680: Resilience and Renewal*—has also written on social history. See, for example, "The Way of Yin and Yang: A Tradition Revived, Sold, Adopted" and "'Washing Off the Dust': Baths and Bathing in Late Medieval Japan."
9 Spafford, *A Sense of Place*. The quotation appears on page 12.
10 Chūsei kōki kenkyūkai, *Muromachi Sengoku-ki kenkyū o yominaosu*.
11 Since the topics of economic and religious history will be covered by separate chapters in this Handbook, only the sections on political and social history will be reviewed here.
12 Matsunaga Kazuhiro, "Nambokuchō Muromachi-ki ni okeru kuge to buke," 4–28.
13 The construct of *kenmon* is discussed in detail in Chapter 8 of this volume.
14 Momosaki Yuichirō, "Muromachi-dono no chōtei shihai to densō-ron," 29–59.
15 Yamada Tōru, "Nambokuchō-ki no shugo-ron ni megutte," 60–84.
16 Yoshida Kenji, "Muromachi bakufu ni yoru tohi no kenryoku hensei," 85–108.
17 Hirade Masanori, "Sengoku-ki seiji kenryoku-ron no tenkai to kadai," 109–149.
18 Oshita Shigetoshi, "Oda Toyotomi seiken-ka no chiiki shihai," 150–174.
19 Nishijima Tarō, "Chūsei kōki no zaichi ryōshu kenkyū," 175–207.
20 Shimizu Katsuyuki, "Shūzoku-ron toshite no shakai-shi," 208–238.
21 Shimizu, "Shūzoku-ron toshite no shakai-shi." The quotation appears on page 208 of the text.
22 Mieda Akiko, "Chūsei kōki no mibunsei-ron," 239–268.
23 For all its successes, *Yominaosu* continues to be reviewed at numerous historical conferences. One, held on July 19, 2008, soon after the volume appeared, was entitled "'Muromachi Sengoku-ki kenkyū o yominaosu' o yominaosu" (literally "Reevaluating the Reevaluation of Muromachi Sengoku Era Research").
24 Hall, "The Muromachi Bakufu."
25 Berry, *Hideyoshi*. The quote appears on page 166 of the text.
26 Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*; and *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period*.
27 In brief, *shōen*, most commonly translated as "estates," were units of land from which absentee proprietors derived rights of income, usually provided in rice. "Estates" is problematic, as it leads toward erroneous parallels to European feudal models, including the image of the lord living upon these landed units. Under the *kandaka* system land was taxed in coin. Examples of Nagahara's work on this subject include: "The Decline of the Shōen System"; and "The Sengoku Daimyō and the Kandaka System."
28 Examples of efforts to foster cooperation in the field include collaborative efforts like the 2011 University of Michigan conference "Early Modern 'Medieval': Reconstructing Japanese Pasts."
29 Kenneth Robinson, "Japanese Presence, Korean Military Bases, and Korean Maps in the Late Fifteen Century."
30 Amino, *Rethinking Japanese History*. Amino discusses the idea of an Asian cultural sphere in Chapter 2, "The Maritime View of the Japanese Archipelago." In essence, he argues that Japan was not an isolated country in the premodern age, and that throughout, the seas acted not as barriers but as highways promoting interaction with other Asian cultures.
31 Barbara Ruch, "Medieval Jongleurs and the Making of a National Literature." The quoted passage appears on page 291.
32 Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan, 1467–1680: Resilience and Renewal*.
33 Butler, "'Washing Off the Dust': Baths and Bathing in Late Medieval Japan."
34 Morgan Pitelka, *Handmade Culture: Raku Potters, Patrons, and Tea Practitioners in Japan*.
35 Morten Oxenboell, "Akutō: Images of Medieval Japanese Banditry."
36 Eiko Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*.
37 See Karl Friday, *Samurai, Warfare and the State in Early Medieval Japan*, 23–32.
38 Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570–1680*.
39 Ooms' student David Eason's study of the role of emotion in law and in conflict resolution during the premodern period ("Ruled by Restraint: Law, Conflict, and Emotion in Early Modern Japan") is perhaps the only exception to this trend.
40 For more on this topic, see Hall, "Terms and Concepts in Japanese Medieval History: An Inquiry into the Problems of Translation."
41 Sato Kazuhiko et al., *Nihon chūsei-shi kenkyū jiten*; Murakami Tadashi, *Nihon kinsei-shi kenkyū jiten*.
42 Shimoyama Haruhisa, *Go-Hōjō-shi kashindan jinmei jiten*.
43 Kadokawa Nihon chimei dai-jiten henshū iinkai, *Nihon chimei dai-jiten*.

44 Shibatsuji Shunroku, *Sengoku ibun Takeda hen vol. 1*.
45 See, for example, Nakagawa Taiko's modern Japanese translation of Ota Ushikazu's *Shinchō kōki*.
46 Peter Arnesen, *The Medieval Japanese Daimyō: The Ouchi Family's Rule of Suo and Nagato*. Jeff Kurashige, "Serving Your Master: The Kashindan Retainer Corps and the Socio-Economic Transformation of Warring States Japan." The latter explores the relationship between the use of landed grants and stipends by lords in order to maintain their socioeconomic primacy.
47 Hall, "Foundations of the Modern Japanese *Daimyō*."
48 See, for example, Yoshida Yuriko, "*Heinō bunri to mibun*."
49 Jeffrey Mass, *Antiquity and Anachronism in Japanese History*. The quoted line appears on page 200.

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12
Religion in archaic Japan

William E. Deal

Issues in the interpretation of religion in archaic Japan

The study of religion in archaic Japan—*c.*14,000 BCE to *c.*700 CE—is predominately based on the archaeological record. It is only toward the end of this period that textual evidence becomes significant, and even then the textual record is sparse and of dubious historical accuracy. Although texts like *Kojiki* ("Record of Ancient Matters," 712 CE) and *Nihon shoki* ("Chronicles of Japan," 720 CE) purport to narrate Japan's early history, it might be argued that, given the compilation dates for these two texts, the entire period we are dealing with in this chapter is essentially prehistoric. This is underscored by the fact that many historical details described in these texts have been challenged or outright contradicted by both archaeological and textual research. Japanese mytho-historical narratives that purport to describe earlier times are more trustworthy as evidence for political aspirations couched in sacred terms.

Although there are disagreements about exact dating, for our purposes here "archaic Japan" utilizes the following periods and dates:[1]

—Jōmon (14,000 BCE–500 BCE)
—Yayoi (500 BCE–300 CE)
—Kofun (*c.*300–600)
—Asuka (*c.*600–710)

This study is necessarily selective, focusing on some of the key areas of debate in scholarship on religion in archaic Japan, such as continuities between Jōmon, Yayoi, and Kofun period religion and later developments termed "Shintō"; the significance of the shaman-ruler Himiko and her kingdom of Yamatai to the formation of the Japanese nation and its religious underpinnings; and the introduction of Buddhism to the Japanese archipelago. These issues have often been the objects of ardent disagreements on both historical and nationalistic grounds. While detailed discussion of these matters is beyond the scope of this chapter, we can sketch the larger contours of these controversies.

There are also a number of contested interpretive issues any exploration of ancient Japanese religion must take into account. These issues range over matters of nomenclature, the kinds of

evidence available for interpreting ritual practices and beliefs—in our case, both extensive material artifacts and limited texts—and the nature of assumptions made when interpreting the evidence.

"Japanese religion"

Any discussion of religion in archaic Japan needs to be mindful of addressing two interrelated issues implied by the terms "religion" and "Japan." The Japanese word for "religion" is *shūkyō*, but this term only became current in Japan in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was borrowed from the Western word and was focused on the notion of religion as doctrinal beliefs rather than on ritual practices.[2] In our study here, doctrine—however framed or derived from material culture and early texts—is significantly less important than ritual practices and the beliefs that both fueled and were fueled by these ritual actions.

Similarly, for the period under study here, we need to be extremely careful of assuming too much about the terms we are using to describe our object of study. The notion of "Japanese religion," which tends to suggest some fixed or clearly delineated set of ritual practices and beliefs, is especially problematic. Further, we also need to be careful not to read contemporary interpretive sensibilities into the Japanese religious past. Thus, we cannot speak of Japanese religion at this point because that suggests the notion of a continuous nation and a discernible continuity of religious rituals and beliefs.

There are good reasons, too, to be dubious of even the term "Japan." If by "Japan" we mean a national identity, then the term is misused because, arguably, the notion of a country of Japan does not begin to emerge until the end of the period under study here. Instead, the term "Japanese archipelago" is a better way of describing the location of our study rather than assuming that "Japan" refers to a unified political entity. Ancient Japanese religion, then, is best viewed as the practices and beliefs of people inhabiting the Japanese archipelago at various places and times. We will refer to Japan and Japanese religion in this chapter, but only as shorthand and being mindful not to assume more than we can reliably mean by terms such as "archaic Japan" and "religion."

Archaeological and textual evidence for religion in archaic Japan

The archaeological record, particularly material culture and spatial arrangements, provide insights into the ritual worlds of early inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago.[3] Interpreting the archaeological record, however, raises a significant question: What aspects of the archaeological record can be interpreted as expressing religious ideas or ritual practices? Put differently, in the absence of any textual record with explicit religious references, what aspects of material culture constitute "religion?" How do archaeological artifacts map onto rituals and beliefs?

Our assumptions about how to read the archaeological record will have a great influence on what it is we think we are seeing. For instance, when aspects of the material record suggest some kind of ritual practice, on what basis do we make assumptions about whether a ritual complex is communal, family-oriented, or more personal? Further, what assumptions do we make—and on what basis—about the extent to which the ritual might have been practiced across a cultural region or the extent to which the ritual was organized or subject to some sort of sacerdotal control? In general, scholars have tried to apply larger religious categories to the archaeological evidence. For instance, Kaner identifies several themes derived from the evidence, such as cosmological views, the notion of ritual specialists, the monumentality of the spatial evidence, the spiritual and ritual relationship between human beings and animals, and life-cycle rituals, among others.[4]

Work on Japanese archaeological sites is quite active and has resulted in a huge amount of material data to interpret. Thus, the discussion here is necessarily selective and focuses on some of the major issues and debates on how to discern religion from the archaeological record and accurately interpret it.[5]

The textual record, although extremely limited, also presents significant interpretive problems concerning religion in ancient Japan. To what extent are early texts reliable narratives of the histories and periods they discuss? This is especially problematic for texts that were compiled centuries after the events that they narrate. In the textual record, then, we are confronted with the problem of reading the Japanese past, including Japanese religion, through ideological perspectives that were often concerned with the origins and uniqueness of the Japanese people and nation. Japanese mythology clearly does this, but reading Japanese uniqueness as either derived from the prehistoric evidence or having a lineage back to it is also a significant issue in interpreting religion in ancient Japan. Reading the Japanese past through ideological perspectives occurs both at the time of the compilation of the two earliest Japanese mytho-histories and also in modern and contemporary interpretations of the archaeological record.

Issues of origins and religious continuity

One of the most significant interpretive debates encountered in the study of religion in archaic Japan concerns issues of the origins of a distinctive Japanese identity and culture—including religion—and its continuity over time. These debates involve readings of both the archaeological and textual records. The traditional view of the continuity of Japanese religious beliefs and rituals holds that there was a formative period of Japanese religion that established the foundation for subsequent Japanese religious developments and the unique Japanese sensibilities that inform different religious expressions. This formative period is typically traced back to Yayoi and Kofun period rituals and beliefs, and extends into the early formation of the Japanese state. Others, however, trace a unique Japanese identity earlier in time to the Jōmon period.[6]

Some scholars have focused on the notion that Shintō traditions, closely identified with the imperial family, stretch in a continuous past to the Jōmon and Yayoi periods. Such a perspective reads the archaeological record in terms of rituals and beliefs that significantly post-date the objects under study. Thus, it is argued, Shintō's origins date to at least the Yayoi period.[7] Mori argues for the identity of Yayoi period culture and ritual with religious elements that are at least incipiently Shintō:

> the least we can say is that the excavations of ritual sites from the Yayoi period leave little doubt that during this period, people believed in, and worshipped, spiritual powers that controlled the weather and the crops. These sites bespeak the existence at this early date of what we may call *kami* worship.[8]

For Mori, though, Shintō origins may also have antecedents as far back as the Jōmon: "the animism of the Jomon period will also have to be taken into account as a possible ancestor of Shintō."[9]

Framing aspects of archaic Japanese material culture in terms of Shintō or a proto-Shintō (sometimes referred to as primitive Shintō) was deeply influenced by the archaeologist Ōba Iwao (1899–1975), a professor at Kokugakuin University, whose multi-volume *Shintō kōkogaku kōza* ("Lectures on Shintō Archaeology") played a pivotal role in promoting this view of Shintō origins. As Mark Hudson and Simon Kaner argue, Ōba's influential scholarship is "a good example of how archaeology has been seen as national history in Japan."[10] The problem with this

perspective, and one that is finding increasing resistance in the scholarship of archaeologists like Clare Fawcett, Hudson, Kaner, and Mizoguchi Kōji, is that it assumes a continuity between contemporary Japanese religious sensibilities and those of the ancient past on the basis of a postulated Japanese cultural identity that began in prehistoric times uncovered by archaeological discoveries as opposed to empirical research on what has been unearthed.[11]

Seeking origins and a continuity to the past is related to a complex of ideas referred to as *Nihonjin-ron* ("Theory of the Japanese People"), the idea that there exists a unique Japanese national identity that sets a homogeneous Japanese people apart from other cultures and that is observable, *inter alia*, through an investigation of Japan's past history.[12] Those scholars pursuing the past through this framework tend to start with whatever aspects of Japanese culture they consider distinctively Japanese and look for evidence for these elements in the ancient Japanese past. For instance, "Notions of sacredness, purity, and pollution are very important in later Japanese religion, but to what extent can they be extended back into Japanese prehistory?"[13]

Jōmon period (14,000–500 BCE) ritual practices and beliefs

The first human settlements on the Japanese archipelago date to at least 35,000 years ago. This paleolithic (*kyūsekki*) period extended until approximately 14,000 BCE when the Jōmon period, marked by the initial appearance of pottery on the Japanese archipelago, became prominent. The Jōmon period derives its name from cord designs (*jōmon*) inscribed on this pottery. Nevertheless, the long duration of the Jōmon period witnessed significant variations in pottery designs. The people of the Jōmon period were socially organized as bands of hunter-gatherers centered in eastern Japan.[14] Despite the implication that the term Jōmon refers to a single cultural entity, there were many variations in Jōmon culture, driven in part by the different environments in which Jōmon cultures resided. It is arguably better to think of the Jōmon as an assemblage of related, but different, cultural expressions. Similarly, although Jōmon pottery had ritual uses and its designs were religiously symbolic, there is no evidence that this constituted anything like a widespread or unified religion.[15] It should also be noted that the long Jōmon period is typically divided into six (or seven) smaller periods, but our study here will not take account of these different time frames.[16]

In general, scholars have noted that evidence for Jōmon period ritual is found in both specific artifacts of material culture, but also in the spatial orientation of certain locations. Jōmon material culture, and the items and patterns interpreted as religious, are often connected to aspects of a hunter-gatherer mode of subsistence. Material artifacts and objects with possible religious significance include pit cave dwellings, clay figurines, masks, and stone pillars.

Nelly Naumann discusses Jōmon religious "fragments" that can be discerned from the archaeological record.[17] On the basis of this evidence, she identifies several religious traits of Jōmon culture. Among these traits, Naumann underscores the importance of the relationship between human beings and animals as evidenced by the burial and arrangement of animal bones, particularly skulls, suggesting ideas about animal spirits.[18] Such a focus might be expected of hunter-gatherers relying on animals as a source of food and other needs. Differing burial practices, depending upon the region and the time period, suggest diverse views about death and afterlife rather than a single set of ideas. Naumann cites the practice of burying infants in jars as evidence for afterlife beliefs. This kind of evidence is strongly suggestive of belief in an afterlife, but it also highlights the limitations of the material record in so far as it is impossible to know what particular beliefs this ritualized burial form expressed. Other objects of Jōmon material culture include ceramic figurines in both human and animal shapes, clay masks, and the patterned placement of stones, including phallic stone pillars.[19]

Kobayashi Tatsuo and other scholars argue that Jōmon sites were built and arranged in such a way that they aligned with the movements of the sun and moon and thereby reflected cosmological concerns.[20] Many such sites exist, especially in eastern Japan, and some scholars interpreted this as evidence for ritual centers. It is debated whether stone circles, such as the large three-ringed stone circle at Komakino in Aomori prefecture represent a burial site or a ritual center.[21]

Archaeological work has uncovered a very large number of Jōmon human- and animal-designed ceramic figurines.[22] Important sites include Shakudō in Yamanashi prefecture and the Sannai Maruyama site in Aomori prefecture.[23] Scholars have suggested that these clay figurines have ritual significance. Because, in this region, figurines sometimes have female form, there are scholars who argue that at least some Jōmon cultures engaged in goddess worship.[24]

At the Shakadō site, many of the figurines were purposely broken and deposited in multiple locations, suggesting their use for some ritual purpose.[25] One theory is that the fragmented figurines were connected to agricultural production: the fragments "were buried in the hope that grains would grow from the pieces, which were believed to be the corpse of a grain goddess."[26] This interpretation, regardless of whether it is correct or not, is derived from a grain origin narrative found in similar form in both the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*.[27]

The *Kojiki* version relates the story of the food goddess who is murdered by another deity. As a result, from her corpse grew various items: "in her two eyes there grew rice seeds; in her two ears there grew millet; in her nose there grew red beans; in her genitals there grew wheat; and in her rectum there grew soy beans."[28] Is this story best understood as expressing something important about Jōmon culture, or about culture in the eighth-century Japanese archipelago (when the *Kojiki* was compiled), or about a continuity between these two eras, or some combination of elements derived from both time periods?

Jōmon burial practices varied, depending on the particular time and place. In general, given the attention paid to body placement, the physical space designed for burials, and objects found along with human remains, it is likely that Jōmon people had a concept of an afterlife coupled with a notion of souls or spirits of the deceased. The late Jōmon period Mukaisamada site in Akita prefecture provides one example of ritual practices related to death and burial. This site includes stones arranged in two circles in a space set apart from areas where people lived and worked. Beliefs and ritual practices are suggested by the large number of items—such as ceramic figurines and beads—found at or in the vicinity of the burial grounds. One theory holds that these items accompanied the soul or spirit of the deceased to the next world.[29]

Yayoi period (500 BCE–300 CE) ritual practices and beliefs

The Yayoi period, named for an area of Tokyo where pottery associated with Yayoi culture was first excavated in 1884, marks the development of agrarian subsistence farming—wet rice agriculture and other grains—and evidence of at least some social stratification. The relative stability of rice cultivation was a key factor in a marked increase in population over the course of the Yayoi period. This was also a period of increased migrations to the Japanese archipelago from the Asian continent, and particularly from the Korean peninsula.[30] The extent and significance of migration from the mainland is a matter of much debate and is important to arguments about Japanese cultural continuity—both with the previous Jōmon period and forward to *Nihonjinron*-style perspectives.

Not surprisingly, ritual practices and beliefs became associated with wet rice agriculture and other technologies imported from the Chinese mainland, such as metallurgy and silk production. An important theoretical concern in the exploration of Yayoi religion is a consideration of the

extent to which rice cultivation and its use as a major food source was connected with ritual practices and beliefs. Evidence for ritual practices and beliefs in Yayoi culture are mostly connected with material culture—such as bronze bells and mirrors, and oracle bones—and spatial arrangements—architectural spaces and the disposition of corpses. Toward the end of the period we find some textual evidence that has shaped interpretations of Yayoi ritual practices and beliefs. As with the Jōmon period, the notion of "Yayoi religion" is shorthand for a complex of rituals and beliefs that assumed different forms and do not constitute a singular set of Yayoi practices.

Metallurgical technologies imported from the mainland were used to produce both tools and ritual objects. Ritual items were made of bronze and included bells (*dōtaku*), mirrors, and weapons. Bells were often illustrated with geometric designs and sometimes with daily-life scenes and animal images. Similarly, Yayoi pottery includes incised animal images. There are numerous theories to explain the ritual significance of Yayoi symbolism. For instance, deer are one animal often represented on bells and pottery. Mark Hudson and others argue that there is sufficient evidence—based, in part, on the number of deer representations relative to other depicted animals—to support the claim that deer were revered as deities.[31] Harunari Hideji cites stories circulating in eighth-century Japanese texts about the overnight germination of rice seeds planted in deer blood as further support for the deer-as-deity interpretation.[32]

Bronze weapons were also used as ritual objects, related both to ruling authority and to agricultural rituals meant to benefit the larger community. At the Yoshinogari site in Saga prefecture in northern Kyushu, burial sites associated with the ruling elite included bronze weapons.[33] At the Kojindani site in Shimane prefecture, bronze weapons and other bronze objects were buried in a hillside location some distance from the nearest settlement, which, according to Mark Hudson, indicates agricultural rituals intended for the well-being of the larger community.[34]

The Yoshinogari site is also significant to the study of religion in archaic Japan because of its similarities to a kingdom on the Japanese archipelago described in a Chinese history, *Wei zhi* ("History of the Kingdom of Wei"; J. *Gishi*), in a section known as the *Wo ren chuan* ("The People of Wo"; J. *Wajin den*). This Chinese court history details events during the Wei Dynasty (221–265 CE). Compiled in the late third century CE, it includes an account of a land (C. *guo*; J. *koku* or *kuni*) referred to as Wo (Wa in Japanese) on the Japanese archipelago that corresponds to the late Yayoi period. The *Wei zhi* says that this land, perhaps a kingdom of some sort, was ruled by a woman named Himiko (alt., Pimiko), who resided in a place known as Yamatai.[35]

Where exactly Yamatai was located on the Japanese archipelago has led to much heated debate among Japanese scholars and the Japanese popular press that continues to the present. The *Wei zhi* provides no evidence, but Kinai (central Honshū) and northern Kyūshū are the two regions most often cited as likely locations. Some archaeologists who support the northern Kyūshū region believe that the Yoshinogari site was the location of Yamatai. Those who see Yamatai as the precursor to the early Yamato state, which was located in the area of current day Nara prefecture, advocate the Kinai theory. The debate over Yamatai's location is significant, then, also because of its connection to ideological assertions of the imperial family's direct lineage to the Kinai and the Yamato state.[36]

The textual evidence from the *Wei zhi* is often cited as evidence that Himiko was a shaman and that therefore Yayoi culture did not distinguish between political and sacerdotal authority. According to the *Wei zhi*, Himiko "occupied herself with magic and sorcery, bewitching the people. Though mature in age, she remained unmarried. She had a younger brother who assisted her in ruling the country. After she became the ruler, there were few who saw her."[37] Mizoguchi Kōji corroborates this view with archaeological evidence. He interprets the remains of a person uncovered at the Yoshitake-Takagi site in Kyūshū as a shaman because the body was buried along with a bronze mirror and bronze weapons. Mizoguchi views the mirror as symbolic of

religious authority and the weapons as symbolic of social or political authority. He interprets this combined role as an indication of a shaman-ruler "mediating the relationship between the community and the supernatural as an Other."[38]

This perspective is consonant with Gina Barnes and other archaeologists' perception of a shift in religious sensibilities by the latter part of the Yayoi period. The shift focused on what Barnes refers to as "ritual replacement," in which ritual activity once focused on agriculture and rice production was replaced by worship of rulers.[39] Worship of the "spirit of the rice" was ritually replaced by worship of the "spirit of the ruler" as society became increasingly hierarchical. Importantly, the transfer from rice to ruler as the object of worship happened concurrently with incipient notions of a state as the primary political identity.

According to the *Wei zhi*, the Japanese archipelago was comprised of multiple small kingdoms. Yoshinogari was itself a large, well-developed area, and may have been one such kingdom or its center. Yoshinogari included protective moats, a large burial mound, elevated granaries, and other evidence of a community with at least a simple class structure and a ruling elite.[40] Yayoi sites like Yoshinogari include features suggestive of new notions of sacred space. For instance, the construction of raised-floor buildings at some sites has been interpreted as efforts to demarcate sacred space. Such buildings, it is argued, constitute an early form of religious shrine that would later become associated—rightly or wrongly—with Shintō shrines. J. Edward Kidder and others identify these structures as intended for use by rulers in a period in which there was no distinction between political and sacerdotal authority. According to Kidder, a raised-floor building "persisted as an elite dwelling and was the structural form adopted for the first of the religious shrines—Izumo Taisha and Ise Jingu both have elevated floors—presumably because it was the shaman's house."[41]

Kofun period (300–600) ritual practices and beliefs

From the perspective of ancient religion, the transition from the Yayoi to the Kofun period is charted in part by the further development of an elite ruling class representing its religious and political authority through large mounded tombs. According to the *Wei zhi*, when Himiko died, she was interred in a great mound of raised earth.[42] The Kofun period marks the further development of burials symbolic of ruling power. The name for the period is derived from the construction of *kofun* (literally, old tomb), or large keyhole-shaped tombs, that were expressions of an incipient state and ruling power, especially in the Kinai region of the central Japanese archipelago (the modern day Kansai region). This period witnessed the development of a complex agrarian society and the beginnings of early state society in the form of chiefdoms legitimated through imperial genealogies.[43]

The construction of *kofun* spanned some four centuries, beginning around 300 CE and ending around 700 CE, when they were replaced by Buddhist symbols of ruling power. The amount of time, wealth, and human labor required to build the largest of these tombs indicates the level of symbolic significance attached to these constructions. The largest, supposedly the tomb of Great King Nintoku, is 486 meters long. These tombs also included a variety of valuable items, including bronze mirrors and weapons, and beads known as *magatama*. Often made of jade in the Kofun period, *magatama* were, according to many accounts in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, objects connected with the gods, the lineage of great kings and queens, and ruling authority.

Kofun construction not only symbolized political power, but was connected to religious practices and beliefs. There are a number of theories about the religious ideas expressed by *kofun* burial practices. Among them are notions about deity (*kami*) worship, the existence of a ruler-*kami* relationship, and the extent to which such a relationship may be linked to later identification

of the imperial line with the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu. At some level, *kofun* represented what we might refer to as sacred space—large burial mounds set apart by moats. There is also much speculation about the extent to which burial objects, such as figurines, pots, and other items were meant for use in an afterlife. According to Matsumura Kazuo, there is some evidence that certain grave objects were strategically placed for use in "ritual feasts for the dead." Matsumura also cites evidence suggesting that "the back part of the mounds were the domain of the dead and the front part the domain of the living."[44] Feasts for the dead and a ritual separation of space for the living and deceased evokes the story of the god Izanagi's descent to the underworld in which he encounters a feast for the dead as recounted in mytho-histories like the *Kojiki*.[45]

Kofun period scholars often note changes in ritual practices and their increasing value in the asserting and securing of ruling authority. Rituals were practiced not only at the large tombs of powerful rulers, but at new ritual sites—including mountains and smaller islands—across the archipelago that constituted a burgeoning sacred geography.[46] An important and increasingly contested question concerns the extent to which, by the Kofun period, ritual sites and practices map on to later practices described as Shintō. This is a topic of much dispute and is inextricably coupled to the kinds of questions about the continuity of Japanese history and Japanese identity discussed above.[47]

The Kofun period witnessed increasing trade and immigration between the Japanese archipelago and the East Asian mainland. Aspects of Chinese ritual practices and beliefs were among the cultural ideas exchanged. The extent to which Daoist practices might have influenced the development of Kofun period religiosity is much debated. Gina Barnes, for instance, argues that Kofun period rulers utilized the Daoist legend of the Queen Mother of the West in support of claims to ruling authority and in relation to afterlife beliefs connected with *kofun* building.[48] She makes this claim, in part, because tomb burial items such as bronze mirrors sometimes included the likeness of the Queen Mother. Other scholars find Barnes's evidence circumstantial at best and argue that her thesis cannot be sustained on the basis of current evidence. Joan Piggott, for instance, in a review of Barnes' book, argues that there is not

> a single narrative in Japanese mythology that unambiguously evidences the Queen Mother … Were it so important to late Yayoi and early Kofun people, would not memory of its deity be preserved somewhere in recognizable form in later Japanese mythology?[49]

Piggott's view underscores the need to consider the archaeological record in concert with the textual.[50]

The issue of the Queen Mother notwithstanding, it is clearly the case that the Kofun period was increasingly influenced by Chinese cultural ideas and images. The Takamatsuzuka tomb in Nara prefecture is a significant example of this influence. Excavations in 1972 revealed that the tomb's burial chamber included wall paintings of figures depicted in Chinese and Korean garb. The painted ceiling of the tomb depicts constellations; the four tomb walls, aligned with the four cardinal points, depict the Chinese cosmological animals associated with each direction: Black Tortoise (north), Vermilion Bird (south), Azure Dragon (east), and White Tiger (west). Although not a large tomb, scholars have conjectured that this was the burial site of a member of a ruling family or otherwise influential person, perhaps a Korean connected with the ruling authority.[51]

Kofun period archaeological evidence is often matched with the textual record found in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. As suggested earlier, there have been efforts to read accounts of the descent of the imperial family from the lineage of gods described in these two texts to the archaeological record. Thus, at least some scholarly assumptions about the meaning of *kofun* artifacts, spatial orientation, and connections to ruling power are tied to mytho-historical accounts in texts

compiled at least 100 years after the end of the Kofun period. Further destabilizing the historical credibility of texts like the *Kojiki* is the fact that their relatively seamless narrative of imperial lineage back to the descent of the gods is not matched by the archaeological record. There are ideological agendas at play in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* that reflect the need for the increasingly powerful great kings and queens—later referred to as emperors and empresses—to consolidate and legitimate their claims to authority. These narratives tell us more about the period in which they were written than the earlier time periods they purport to recount.

Asuka period (600–710) ritual practices and beliefs

By the beginning of the seventh century, an extended family of ruling elites had formed what is known as the Yamato court. This constituted a significant move toward creating a polity that included a much wider area and that began to consolidate formerly independent kingdoms under an increasingly unified reign. As we have seen, ruling authority had previously been legitimated by the construction of *kofun* and other symbols of power. The Yamato court, however, turned to newly embraced Buddhist ritual practices and beliefs to further legitimate its rule. Although there is some textual evidence available for interpreting Asuka period religion—the *Nihon shoki*, for instance, recounts Buddhism's importation to and acceptance in Japan—archaeological material remains important for understanding this time period. A textual passage may describe a Buddhist temple, for example, but archaeological excavations can provide a much clearer picture of the overall design, size, spatial orientation, and other aspects of the building and its site. Similarly, the archaeological record is important for comparative studies of material culture found in different parts of Japan, or between items found on the Japanese archipelago versus similar items found on the East Asian mainland. This kind of comparative research is essential for making reasonable claims about the movement of people and culture across times and places.

Buddhist scholars have tended to pay scant attention to the archaeological record, relying instead on written texts for interpreting Buddhism's early history on the Japanese archipelago. The *Nihon shoki*, because of its comparatively detailed account of the transmission of Buddhist material culture and ideas to the Japanese archipelago, has been the subject of much scholarly scrutiny. According to the *Nihon shoki*, Buddhism was introduced to the Japanese islands in 552 CE, a gift from the Korean king of Paekche (J. Kudara) to the Japanese emperor. Further, this account indicates that there was disagreement between Yamato court factions over the wisdom of accepting and worshipping a "foreign" god (*kami*) such as Buddha. In the end, we are told, Buddhism was embraced, becoming, from a contemporary scholarly perspective, an ideological support for the political power coalescing around the Yamato court.[52]

The *Nihon shoki*'s story of Buddhism's transmission to the Japanese archipelago is, however, fraught with a number of problems that have long been recognized by modern scholars.[53] The *Nihon shoki* was compiled in 720 CE by imperial command. The account of Buddhism's transmission to Japan, therefore, is nearly two centuries after the fact. Although the official account of the transmission of Buddhism to the Japanese archipelago is historically suspect, the intention behind it seems clearer. The *Nihon shoki* account reflects the extent to which Buddhist ritual practices and beliefs had become central to aristocratic families. The ruling family also needed to assert its control over Buddhist ritual practices as a means to legitimate political authority. The *Nihon shoki* was at least one vehicle for doing so, representing Buddhism as a commodity accepted in a particular year by, and under the control of, the ruling family and its supporters.[54]

Despite this official record, the transmission of Buddhism was significantly more complicated than the *Nihon shoki* account suggests. Tamura Enchō, for instance, notes that there were two main transmission routes that Buddhism traversed from the East Asian mainland to Japan. The

first was a royal route that involved the patronage of Buddhism by the ruling class. The other was a route of individual travelers, such as merchants, missionaries, and immigrants.[55] These individuals practiced Buddhist rituals and therefore transmitted Buddhism in an informal and unofficial manner.[56] Missing, too, from the official account, is the geographic context in which Buddhism was transmitted. Barnes refers to the Yellow Sea interaction sphere, while Piggott uses the term China Sea interaction sphere.[57] Both are references to the idea that there was a multidirectional flow of intellectual and material culture between the Chinese mainland, the Korean peninsula, and the Japanese archipelago, especially occurring between the third and eighth centuries.

There are many other issues regarding the transmission and early practice of Buddhism to Japan that warrant additional research and clarification. Three prominent issues are 1) the role of women in early Japanese Buddhism, 2) the relationship between Buddhism and indigenous religious practices, and 3) the role of Prince Shōtoku in the dissemination of Buddhism in Japan. Accounts of early Japanese Buddhist practices and their patronage by powerful aristocratic families—most notably the Soga—include the fact that the first Asuka period monastics were three young women related to the Soga and other families.[58] Ōsumi Kazuo discusses the question of why the first Japanese Buddhist renunciants were women if Japanese Buddhism viewed women negatively, as had been the case in other Buddhist cultural contexts. According to Ōsumi, the answer is found in relation to prior Japanese religious practices and ideas: "In indigenous, pre-Buddhist religious practices, those who served the native deities, the mediums who conveyed the words of the gods to the Japanese people and acted as intermediaries to convey their wishes to the gods, were mostly women." Thus, he concludes that women were the obvious choice as the first Buddhist practitioners in Japan.[59]

The second issue concerns the status of the religious tradition referred to as Shintō. The court debate over whether to accept a foreign god, the Buddha, or to reject foreign gods in favor of indigenous gods has often been couched in terms of a struggle between Buddhism and Shintō. To do so, however, is to read later religious developments into the past. Several scholars, such as Kuroda Toshio and Yoshida Kazuhiko, have persuasively argued that Shintō did not become an organized religious tradition until centuries after the events described in the *Nihon shoki*.[60] On this basis, it makes more sense to interpret the early Japanese encounter with Buddhism as conceptualized in terms of deities (*kami*) that were either native (*kuni tsu kami*) or foreign (*adashikuni no kami*), rather than as a dispute between two religious traditions, Shintō and Buddhism. At stake here was not a particular religion, but rather control over rituals and cultic centers that were implicated in legitimating and maintaining political power.

The third issue concerns the historicity of Prince Shōtoku (Shōtoku Taishi). Shōtoku was Queen Suiko's nephew and chief minister, and was, according to the *Nihon shoki* and other texts, a devout and erudite Buddhist who understood the profundity and truth of Buddhist doctrine long before others in Japan. Shōtoku has been treated historically as both the father of the Japanese nation and the founder of Japanese Buddhism. A cult of Shōtoku Taishi appeared fairly soon after his reported death in 622 and treated him as having Buddha- or bodhisattva-like salvific powers. Recent scholarship not only disputes this image of Shōtoku, but questions whether he was even an historical person. Some scholars argue that Shōtoku, whether real or not, was primarily a constructed image used to legitimate the political ambitions of the aristocratic families that commissioned the compilation of texts like the *Nihon shoki* in order to explicitly connect the Yamato ruling elite to Buddhist rituals and beliefs.[61]

By the end of the Asuka period, Buddhist ritual practices and beliefs were under the firm control of the ruling elites, who were using Buddhism as the ideological centerpiece of a state under centralized rule, a task that was effectively completed by the subsequent Nara period. In

645, King Kōtoku issued an imperial edict creating a more formal and structured set of monastic rules, and, in the process, made clear the court's control over Buddhism and its practices.[62] At the same time as the court was taking measures to secure its Buddhist interests, Buddhist practices were gradually spreading beyond the Yamato region to more remote parts of the Japanese archipelago. As one example, Yoshida Kazuhiko discusses a monk named Hōrin, who, in the late seventh century, gathered lay Buddhists together to copy sūtras in Kawachi province.[63] The question of how widespread Buddhism had become in the Japanese archipelago and the extent to which the government was able to direct its spread on its own terms are matters needing additional research.

Prospects

This review of scholarship on religion in archaic Japan has focused on the need to integrate research on the archaeological record—including material culture and site spatial arrangements—with the textual record. This is necessary in order to craft the most accurate historical narrative of ancient religious practices on the Japanese archipelago. To this end, it is clear that both the historical record and scholarly perspectives are subject to prevailing ideological and methodological perspectives, views that necessarily inform how the past is understood. As scholars of archaic Japanese religion, we must not only concern ourselves with the motivations that undergird historical narratives like those found in the *Nihon shoki*, both also with our own assumptions about what the archaeological and textual records reveal about the past. Failure to attend to these assumptions and motivations will result in our inability to proffer critical, rigorous histories of religion in archaic Japan. We can never put forth value-free interpretations of the past, but we can be mindful of impediments to understanding ideological structures that are deeply embedded in the construction of historical narratives whether in the past or in contemporary scholarship.

Notes

1 On periodization issues, see Gina L. Barnes, *China, Korea, and Japan: The Rise of Civilization in East Asia*; Imamura Keiji, *Prehistoric Japan: New Perspectives on Insular East Asia*; Tsuboi Kiyotari, "Issues in Japanese Archaeology"; and Mizoguchi Koji, "Self-Identification in the Modern and Post-Modern World and Archaeological Research: A Case Study from Japan."
2 Sarah Thal, *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods: The Politics of a Pilgrimage Site in Japan*, 8. For an extended discussion of the concept "religion" in Japan, see Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*.
3 Japanese archaeology surveys with discussions of rituals and beliefs include C. Melvin Aikens and Takayasu Higuchi, *Prehistory of Japan*; Richard Pearson, *Ancient Japan*; Imamura, *Prehistoric Japan: New Perspectives on Insular East Asia*; and Mizoguchi Kōji, *An Archaeological History of Japan: 30,000 BC to AD 700*.
4 Simon Kaner, "The Archaeology of Religion and Ritual in the Prehistoric Japanese Archipelago," 457.
5 For a general discussion of the archaeology of religion and of interpreting archaeological material in terms of ritual, see Mark J. Hudson and Simon Kaner, "Editors' Introduction: Towards an Archaeology of Japanese Ritual and Religion," 114–119.
6 See, for instance, Umehara Takeshi, *Nihonjin no tamashii*, 24–36; Victor Harris, *Shinto: The Sacred Art of Ancient Japan*; Kasahara Kazuo, *A History of Japanese Religion*, 27–46; Mori Mizue, "Ancient and Classical Japan: The Dawn of Shinto," 12–14; Byron Earhart, *Japanese Religion: Unity and Diversity*, 22–28; Robert Ellwood, *Introducing Japanese Religion*, 75–78.
7 See Harris, *Shinto*; Mori, "Ancient and Classical Japan."
8 Mori, "Ancient and Classical Japan," 12.
9 Mori, "Ancient and Classical Japan," 14.
10 Hudson and Kaner, "Editors' Introduction," 119.

11 Clare Fawcett, "Archaeology and Japanese Identity"; Mark J. Hudson, "Pots not People: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Postwar Japanese Archaeology"; Kaner, "The Archaeology of Religion and Ritual"; Mizoguchi, "Self-Identification."
12 On *Nihonjin-ron* issues see, for instance, Peter N. Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*.
13 Hudson and Kaner, "Editors' Introduction," 115.
14 Mizoguchi, "Self-Identification," 56.
15 On these issues, see Imamura, *Prehistoric Japan*; Habu Junko, *Ancient Jomon of Japan*; and Kobayashi Tatsuo, *Jomon Reflections: Forager Life and Culture in the Prehistoric Japanese Archipelago*.
16 On Jōmon periodization, see Habu, *Ancient Jomon of Japan*, 37–42.
17 Nelly Naumann, *Japanese Prehistory: The Material and Spiritual Culture of the Jomon Period*, 221–226.
18 On dog burials, see Melvin and Takayasu, *Prehistory of Japan*. On burial of dolphin bones, see Naumann, *Japanese Prehistory*.
19 Naumann, *Japanese Prehistory*.
20 Tatsuo, *Jomon Reflections*.
21 Kodama Daisei, "Komakino Stone Circle and Its Significance for the Study of Jomon Social Structure."
22 On Jōmon ceramic figurines, see Naumann, *Japanese Prehistory*; Koji Mizoguchi, "The Emergence of Anthropomorphic Representation in the Japanese Archipelago: A Social Systemic Perspective"; Simon Kaner, *The Power of Dogu: Ceramic Figurines from Ancient Japan*.
23 On this latter site, see Junko Habu, "Growth and Decline in Complex Hunter-Gatherer Societies: A Case Study from the Jomon Period Sannai Maruyama Site, Japan."
24 See, for instance, Yoshida Atsuhiko, *Jōmon shūkyō no nazo*.
25 Yamagata Mariko, "The Shakadō Figurines and Middle Jōmon Ritual in the Kōfu Basin."
26 Matsumura Kazuo, "Ancient Japan and Religion," 134.
27 Donald l. Philippi, *Kojiki*, 87; William G. Aston, *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*, I.32.
28 Philippi, *Kojiki*, 87.
29 Kaner, "The Archaeology of Religion and Ritual," 460.
30 Mark. J. Hudson, "Japanese Beginnings," 16.
31 Mark. J. Hudson, "Rice, Bronze, and Chieftains: An Archaeology of Yayoi Ritual," 145.
32 Harunari Hideji, "Tsuno no nai shika: Yayoi jidai no nōkō girei." For a summary of Harunari's views, see Hudson, "Rice, Bronze, and Chieftains," 145–146.
33 On Yoshinogari, see Imamura, *Prehistoric Japan*, 182–184.
34 Hudson, "Japanese Beginnings," 18.
35 For a discussion of problems and issues with the geographical terms used in the *Wei zhi* relevant to a discussion of Yamatai, see J. Edward Kidder, *Himiko and Japan's Elusive Chiefdom of Yamatai: Archaeology, History, and Mythology*, 8–10. The large body of scholarship on Himiko and Yamatai includes John Young, *Japanese Historians and the Location of Yamatai*; Walter Edwards, "In Pursuit of Himiko: Postwar Archaeology and the Location of Yamatai"; Imamura, *Prehistoric Japan*, 185–196; William Wayne Farris, *Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures: Issues in the Historical Archaeology of Ancient Japan*, 9–54; Gina L. Barnes, *State Formation in Japan: Emergence of a 4th-Century Ruling Elite*, 83–103; Kidder, *Himiko and Japan's Elusive Chiefdom of Yamatai*.
36 For a discussion of this issue, see Farris, *Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures*, 15–23.
37 Wm. Theodore de Bary et al., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 6–8.
38 Mizoguchi, *An Archaeological History of Japan*, 149–156. The quoted passage appears on p. 156.
39 Barnes, *State Formation in Japan*, 114–115.
40 Melvin C. Aikens and Takayasu Higuichi, "Origins of the Japanese People."
41 Kidder, *Himiko and Japan's Elusive Chiefdom of Yamatai*, 76–78. The quoted passage appears on p. 77.
42 For a discussion of the Yoshinogari tomb, see Mark. J. Hudson and Gina L. Barnes, "Yoshinogari: A Yayoi Settlement in Northern Kyushu."
43 Mizoguchi, "Self-Identification," 56.
44 Matsumura, "Ancient Japan and Religion." The quoted passages appear on pp. 138 and 139.
45 For the *Kojikii* version of the Izanagi underworld story, see Philippi, *Kojiki*, 55–67.
46 On one such island, Okinoshima, see Okazaki Takashi, "Japan and the Continent," 312–316. On the importance of Mount Miwa to to the eventual development of the Yamato state, see Matsumae Takeshi, "Early Kami Worship," 334–341; Barnes, *State Formation in Japan*, 178–198; Kidder, *Himiko and Japan's Elusive Chiefdom of Yamatai*, 239–273.

47 Recent overviews of issues concerning Shintō in archaic Japan include Kuroda Toshio, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion"; Inoue Nobutaka, "Introduction: What is Shinto?"; Mori, "Ancient and Classical Japan."
48 Barnes, *State Formation in Japan*, 178–179; "A Hypothesis for Early Kofun Rulership."
49 Joan R. Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*, 415.
50 For an overview of Daoism in archaic Japan, see Tim Barrett, "Shinto and Taoism in Early Japan."
51 For a detailed description of this tomb, see J. Edward Kidder, "The Newly Discovered Takamatsuzuka Tomb."
52 For the *Nihon shoki* story of the importation of Buddhism to Japan, see Inoue Mitsusada, trans. and ed. *Nihon shoki*, Vol. 2, 474; William E. Deal, "Buddhism and the State in Early Japan," 218ff.
53 For instance, see Tsuda Sōkichi, *Nihon koten no kenkyū*, for a discussion of ideological fabrications in the *Nihon shoki*.
54 William E. Deal and Brian Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, 20.
55 Tamura Enchō, *Zusetsu Nihon bukkyō no rekishi: Asuka, Nara jidai*, 6–8.
56 For an overview of Buddhist transmission issues, see Deal and Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, 17–19.
57 Barnes, *China, Korea, and Japan*; Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*.
58 For the *Nihon shoki* account, see Deal, "Buddhism and the State in Early Japan," 220–222.
59 Ōsumi Kazuo, "Historical Notes on Women and the Japanization of Buddhism," xxxii–xxxiv. The quoted passage appears on p. xxxi.
60 Kuroda Toshio, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion"; and Yoshida Kazuhiko, "Revisioning Religion in Ancient Japan."
61 For a review of scholarly critiques of the historicity of Shōtoku, see Yoshida Kazuhiko, "Revisioning Religion in Ancient Japan," 12–13; and *Kodai bukkyō o yominaosu*, 70–96. The most outspoken critic of the Shōtoku image is arguably Ōyama Seiichi; see *"Shōtoku taishi" no tanjō* and *Shōtoku Taishi no shinjitsu*.
62 Deal, "Buddhism and the State in Early Japan," 224; Deal and Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, 47.
63 Yoshida Kazuhiko, "Revisioning Religion in Ancient Japan." 5–6.

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13
Gender and family in the archaic and classical ages

Ijūin Yōko, with Sachiko Kawai

The meaning of "family" in classical Japan was significantly different from the "family" that we know today. The concept of "family" went through many organizational and functional changes throughout history.

Because studies of family history developed along with the history of state formation, family structure in classical Japan has been considered a matter of important historical concern. Until the 1970s, most historians of Japan claimed that by the time of the early state formation, a patrilineal and patriarchal family system had already been established, and therefore women were under the control of male family heads.

Not everybody assented to this mainstream view, however. In the 1930s, Takamure Itsue proposed that classical Japanese society was not based on unilateral descent. Although her argument was largely ignored in Japan for several decades, Western scholars embraced it almost immediately, incorporating Takamure's views into their own work and thereby improving understanding of marriage patterns in classical Japan.[1] William H. McCullough, for example, contended that early and mid-Heian marriage was never virilocal but rather duolocal, uxorilocal, or neolocal. In any of these three residential modes of marriage, wives and their parents were expected to have been major financial supporters, although such expectations and real practices differed according to the economic power of the wife's family, the age of the married couple, and other variables.[2]

Scholarship on classical Japanese history and women's history has made significant progress since the late twentieth century, and has proven that during classical times Japanese women held rights to own property and to participate in community rituals, just as did men. These studies show that there were female leaders at different levels, from village to province, and that at the level of the realm, women were enthroned and exercised ruling power. This new scholarship has also discovered that women's social status in classical Japan was different from their status in ancient Greece and Rome, and in other Asian areas including India and China.[3] As a result of these discoveries, scholarship starting in the 1980s proposed a new theory of classical Japanese society based on a bilateral family principle, and further refined the understanding of its kinship structure.[4]

The Jōmon and Yayoi periods

The archaeologist Tsude Hiroshi argued that the average height of men had been 8 percent greater than that of women since the time of *homo erectus* and continued to be so throughout the Jōmon, Yayoi, and Kofun (Tumulus) periods. According to Tsude, the greater physical strength of males and the ability of females to give birth and nurse children, played an important role in producing gendered labor divisions.[5]

But while it is true that Jōmon men were in charge of hunting and fishing while women were in charge of gathering plants, collecting shellfish, weaving, and making earthenware; archaeological evidence of ritual objects and ornaments excavated with human bones indicates that Jōmon Japan was not a male-dominated society. Unlike contemporary society, gendered labor divisions in the Jōmon period were not tied to gender discrimination. Moreover, when rice agriculture was introduced to Japan, women initially played a major role in cultivation. Illustrations on bell-shaped bronze vessels from the Yayoi period suggest that women took the role of threshing grain while men were hunting and fishing.[6]

According to Nishino Yukiko, a special characteristic of premodern Japanese agriculture was the absence of pastoral farming to obtain meat. On the Eurasian continent, agriculture and pastoral farming advanced along with gendered labor divisions and enhanced the development of personal ownership.[7] Overall, these developments furthered male domination and helped to establish a patriarchal system. But Japanese society did not follow the same path. This difference is important to remember when examining family in classical Japan.

From the postwar period to the 1980s, archeologists maintained that Yayoi society was organized into "unilateral descent groups," which consisted of a household collective (extended family unit) living in a cluster of pit dwellings.[8] By hypothesizing that multiple dwellings excavated from the site had been in use during the same historical time, these scholars established the unit group theory (*tan'i shūdan setsu*) arguing that the inhabitants who lived in the dwelling were related by blood. Scholarship today, however, questions this theory because it is impossible to prove that these dwellings coexisted at the same time.[9]

Mounded tomb burials and the kinship structure

Kobayashi Yukio, the premier archeologist of the early and mid-twentieth century, argued that one of the reasons why burial mounds were built was the "emergence of hereditary chieftain rights," and that Kofun period society was patrilineal. His views influenced the way in which scholars determined the gender of the deceased in mounded tombs, and at one time it was thought that all those buried were male.[10]

During the 1980s, however, bones excavated from burial mounds were reexamined, revealing that the deceased included females.[11] Furthermore, evidence shows that some of these buried women had borne children. This discovery challenged the previous view, based on the description of Himiko in Gishi wajin den, that female chieftains were virgin priestesses.[12] It is, however, important to note that during the mid-Tumulus period, the number of burial mounds interring female chieftains decreased. Seike Akira claims that this demonstrates that military leaders were becoming more desirable.[13]

In the 1990s, archaeologists attempted to reconstruct kinship relations by examining genetic characteristics detected from Kofun-era skeletons. Noting that there was a transformation of burial styles—from interring bones of siblings in the same graves to burying bones of spouses in the same graves—archaeologists argued for a change in succession pattern around this time, from bilateral to patrilineal.[14] Some archaeologists, however, challenged this view, arguing that there

were many late-Kofun cases in which brothers and sisters were buried in the same graves, and therefore that spouse-based kinship ties had not yet been established.[15] Through a close analysis of primary texts, historians also criticized the idea that husband and wife were buried together, and this argument was, in turn, used by archaeologists to support their claim that spouse-based principles had been established in the Kofun period. According to this text-based analysis, marital ties were fluid (so the husband and wife were usually initially buried in separate graves), but their children later reburied the parents in the same grave, making it merely appear as if the husband and wife had been interred together.[16]

Recent scholarship contends that kinship relations in classical Japan were bilateral.[17] The case of Mononobe no Yuge no Moriya, a member of an influential family in the sixth century, supports this view. Moriya, whose mother was from the Yuge clan, was said to have been the head of both the Mononobe and Yuge clans.[18] A number of petitions reproduced in the late eighth-century chronicle *Shoku Nihongi*, moreover, show some local power holders who had been using their mothers' clan names prior to the adoption of Chinese law asking to "return" to their fathers' clan names, providing further evidence that classical Japan was a bilateral society.

Female leaders during the Kofun era

As previously mentioned, different sources suggest that women exercised leadership in political and economic spheres. For example, the early eighth-century compilations *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, as well as ancient provincial gazeteers (*fudoki*), include stories about female leaders, such as a female deity who brought victory to a certain village in a water right dispute and a female chieftain who resisted the control of the Yamato state. These records, transcribed from oral traditions that emerged during preliterate times, were important historical sources showing significant accomplishments of Yayoi and Kofun female chieftains.[19]

In addition to such mythical figures in oral traditions, records about historical female figures also attest to women's economic influence. Princess Nukatabe (later Sovereign Suiko) possessed a personal worker group, "Nukata-be," named after her princess title. As seen in her case, royals—both men and women—possessed subordinate worker groups (*nashiro* and *koshiro*) with whom they managed royal households, including residential buildings and storehouses. Women of local power-holding families also oversaw groups specialized in weaving (*ori-be*) who served the "great king" (*ōkimi*).

Between the sixth and eighth centuries, half of the great kings and "heavenly sovereigns" (*tennō*, most commonly rendered in English as "emperor") were women. But when the Meiji government established the Former Imperial House Law that prevented women from ascending the throne, historians also developed an "interim ruler" theory to support this government policy. Although this earlier scholarship argued that women ruled only when an appropriate successor (i.e., a male) was absent, and therefore their roles were limited to the safe transfer of the throne to another male heir, Western historians either modified or rejected this argument outright, contending that most female sovereigns were neither passive figureheads nor intermediaries between male successors, but they were active and capable political leaders.[20] In contrast, Japanese scholarship continued to support the "interim ruler" theory until Araki Toshio began questioning this explanation at the close of the twentieth century.[21] Since then, scholars of classical Japanese history have engaged in heated debates over the historical significance of female sovereigns.[22] For example, Yoshie Akiko argues that in order to fully understand the identity and roles of a female rulers, it is important to pay close attention to the bilateral social structure of the era, rather than limiting our discussions only to royal succession issues.[23] Yet another school of thought argues that earlier Japanese rulership was "gender complementary," and that a tradition

of paired chieftains—brother and sister, husband and wife, nephew and aunt—survived even when the gender hierarchy was gradually negating female claims to rule.[24] These new studies contradict the modern stereotype of male-dominated monarchies in East Asia, by documenting the existence of female rulers in the Japanese archipelago from the third to the eighth centuries.

Family under the *ritsuryō* state

The smallest administrative unit created by the *ritsuryō* state was a unit called the "*ko*" (household, or residential unit). In the *Ko ryō* ("Laws on Residential Units"), the state prescribed ways to organize and control residential units, to maintain order within families, and to regulate marriage.[25] Parts of household registers (*koseki*) and provincial population registers, which were based on the *Ko ryō*, have survived and have been archived in the Shōsōin at Tōdaiji in Nara.[26]

Historians disagree over the nature of eighth-century families and their relationship to the "households" recorded in the registers. For example, Tōma Seita, Ishimoda Shō and others have argued—on the premise that the registers mirrored real historical conditions—that eighth-century society was based on paternal joint families, in which collateral members of a patrilineal descent group resided together with their spouses and offspring under the authority of a single male household head.[27] In opposition to this so-called "real condition theory" (*jittai-setsu*), other historians, including Kishi Toshio, argue instead for a "legal fiction" theory ("*gisei-setsu*"), which contends that the early eighth-century family was lineal rather than collateral, but that district chieftains manipulated information included in the household registers, resulting in a gap between reality and the recorded data.[28] Araki Moriaki further proposed a "strategic register making theory" (*henko-setsu*), which argues that the government purposefully organized families into artificial residential units, in order to use them as a foundation for administering the realm.[29]

Sekiguchi Hiroko has analyzed not only the household registers but also other primary texts such as *Manyōshū* to investigate classical Japanese families. She argues that although the terms "heir," "non-heirs," "wife," and "concubine," appear in the residence unit registers, such distinctions did not exist in the reality of classical Japan. Rather, she maintains, these terms were borrowed solely from the Tang codes for administrative purposes. According to Sekiguchi, the customs of monogamy and patrilineal succession from a father to his heir had not yet been established. Furthermore, contemporary patterns of possession and control over lands and people accrued to clans or individuals, but were never seen as family-based. Abe Takehiko showed that collateral succession to clan headship was still practiced during the Nara period, and Inoue Mitsusada reinforced Abe's perspective by analyzing the historical genealogy of Kamo no Agatanushi. By revealing that distant relatives, including a second cousin of a Shimogamo Shrine priest, could be chosen as the latter's clan head, Inoue pointed out that such positions were not transferred patrilineally. These studies show that the patriarchal family as an entity capable of possession or ownership of lands or people had not yet been established during the eighth century.[30]

Newer scholarship has also questioned an earlier view that classical Japanese families were both patrilineal groups and units of economic production. Specifically, Yoshida Takashi challenged this view by differentiating the "*ie*" (a family as a group of people) from the "*yake*" (the management base including land and buildings such as storehouses). He claims that *ie* of commoners, which were still in flux and unstable, had not been established as social units. Also, Akashi Kazunori proved that society in classical Japan was fundamentally bilateral, noting that primary sources show no distinction between patrilineal and matrilineal kinship terms.[31] According to Yoshie Akiko, the smallest unit signifying a familial tie was "a mother and her children." That is, although husbands could be included, they were not an essential part of the basic family unit.[32]

Marriage during the *ritsuryō* era

Marriage in classical Japan was fundamentally a matter of the mutual intentions of a man and a woman. Marriage ceremonies, as such, did not exist until the late Heian period.[33] Prior to that, a marriage was deemed to begin when a man started visiting a woman (*tsumadoi*), and to have ended when he stopped visiting her. Women also could terminate marital relationships by keeping the doors to their home closed to their spouses.

Although some couples ultimately established their own new households, in many cases a man lived in his wife's residence. Even when a wife moved to her husband's residence, neither his parents nor the next generation (i.e., the couple's son and his wife) lived there.[34] The *Manyōshū* includes poems describing this marriage pattern—a man meets a woman, they confirm their mutual affections, the man begins visiting the woman, and then he stops, thus ending their marriage. Another poem from the same collection, written by a young woman for her boyfriend, explains that she could finally marry him because she obtained permission from her mother. This suggests that women's mothers held significant influence over their daughters' marriages.

Prior to the late Nara period, even the sovereign's wives, including his queen consort, did not live at his royal palace. Each of his wives had her own independent household (called "*kisaki no miya*") and lived separately, outside the royal palace.[35] The office of queen consort was established during the reign of Kōnin (709–781, r. 770–781) in the late Nara period, and her residence was constructed within the royal palace for the first time. During the era of Kanmu (737–806, r. 781–806), residences for other wives of the monarch also began to be constructed within the royal palace.[36]

In Tang China, marriage entailed a contract between the families of the husband and the wife, established by a ceremony based on Confucian rituals. A sexual relationship outside these boundaries was considered to be "illicit" and became subject to punishment. Only by marrying and joining her husband's family member could a Tang woman attain status recognized under the law.[37] Consequently, the legal terms designating women within a household differed according to her marital status: unmarried women were referred to as *nü* (Japanese: *nyo*) while married women were called *fú* (Japanese: *fu*). In Japan, however, marriage did not alter a woman's legal status. Thus we find a gloss to the Japanese *ritsuryō* code explaining that "*nyo*" refers not just to unmarried women, but to females in general (as opposed to men).[38]

The Taihō Code (701) specified the hierarchy among the monarch's wives: a queen consort (*kōgō*), a second-level wife (*hi*), a third-level wife (*bunin*), and a fourth-level wife (*hin*).[39] The codes use the terms "wives" or "concubines" to define female spouse types, but such differentiation in actual practice was only recognized for the wives of the monarch.

The *Ko ryō* also included seven conditions under which a husband could leave his wife; if she met any one of them, such as "being jealous," he could unilaterally divorce her. The degree to which this clause reflected actual marriage practices is, however, open to question. For while some clauses—such as the provision allowing children to be included in their mother's household register—were altered in the Japanese codes, to reflect differences between Japanese and Chinese societies, many others were simply carried verbatim into the Japanese codes. Historians examining families in classical Japan must, therefore, be mindful of the possibility of discrepancies between the law and actual practice. Important primary texts to study this topic are the two commentaries on the Yōrō Code, *Ryō no gige* and *Ryō no shūge*, which were compiled during the early Heian period.

Labor and the economy during the *ritsuryō* era

In classical Japan, natural families of the farming population were fluid and unstable, and therefore could not function independently as units for regulating agricultural production. Instead, they were incorporated into larger production groups organized under provincial elites.[40] The state required male subjects to submit agricultural produce taxes paid in rice (*so* or *denso*), produce taxes paid in cloth and other goods (*yō* and *chō*), and "miscellaneous corvée" labor service (*zōyō*). Male subjects were also liable for military conscription. Female subjects, who received two-thirds of the rice paddy allotment given to male subjects, had to submit only agricultural produce taxes, but they were the producers of the silk, cloth, and thread that were the main materials demanded as *yō* and *chō*. Women produced everyday clothing as well as textile products through collaboration with other women, and they actively participated in managing and distributing these products.[41]

On the other hand, local powerful families accumulated private wealth as village and district leaders. According to *Shoku Nihongi*, both male and female members of these local elite houses received court ranks by donating portions of their personal assets to the crown. *Nihon ryōiki*, a collection of Buddhist didactic tales compiled in the early Heian period, provides a detailed picture of the ways in which such families accrued personal wealth. A male leader (*iegimi*) and his wife (*ie no toji*) managed their households (*ie*), which included both real relatives and others without blood ties. Although older scholarship claims that the male ran the household while the wife took care of food distribution, newer studies show that both male and female leaders were co-owners of their *ie* and managed it collaboratively.[42] According to this newer hypothesis, the *ie* of a local influential family could easily decline because of the difficulties faced in maintaining power following the death of an experienced male or female leader. Even more recent scholarship, therefore, argues that regardless of sex, the more capable leader became the family head.[43]

Moreover, a special governing principle in classical Japan was that both aristocratic men and women participated in state politics as officials. At an important ritual event, which many of his followers attended, Shōmu (701–756, r. 724–749) stated, "It is proper that both men and women equally serve the sovereign, because not only men but also women inherit the dignity of their ancestors." As Shōmu's words indicate, women in classical Japan served the ruler as officials, under the principle that both men and women should support the throne.

Service at court brought aristocratic women economic power. When a woman with a court post was promoted to the third rank or above, the state provided her with staff and allowed her to establish an official household. Aristocratic women used their *ie* as a foundation to accumulate personal wealth.[44]

Additionally, women of different socio-political levels—from villages to the royal court—attended important events including rituals and festivities. For example, the state ordered both male and female officials to attend the Great Purification Rite (*ōharae*) held by the court to expiate sins. Furthermore in 721, the state specifically ordered wives, daughters, and sisters of officials to participate in the Great Purification Rite.

Similarly, the concept that only a man should represent the *ie* (and his family members) had not yet been adopted into village-level society. For example, the Yōrō code included laws on ceremonial protocols that prescribed rules for village festivals in the spring. According to eighth-century legal scholars, all men and women of a village gathered at the local festival, where they were informed about the laws and shared food and drink.[45]

Before ending this section, it is important to introduce a perspective essential for analyzing Japanese family and gender under the *ritsuryō* system. Yoshida Takashi observed that the social structure and overall development of Japan at the time the *ritsuryō* system was adopted were

significantly different from those of China. This, he noted, was particularly true with regard to patterns of kinship organization in the two countries. Unlike China, which was a strongly patrilineal society, social structure in seventh- and eighth-century Japan was bilateral, and the *ie* had not been established to function as the foundational social unit.[46] Attempts to import Chinese legal concepts verbatim thus introduced contradictions between law and actual practice.

As Sekiguchi Hiroko has noted, Japan's proximity to the far more technologically and institutionally advanced Tang empire resulted in political reform on the archipelago being driven overwhelmingly by external factors, rather than by internal developments within the social structure and means of production. In spite of this enormous political change, Japanese social structure did not become patriarchal.[47] This is an important point for scholars researching gender relationships and other social phenomena of the classical era.

It is fortunate that recent scholars such as Yoshida have been conducting research focusing on the differences in Japanese and Chinese societies. For example, more recent studies present a different perspective, reflecting on the historical condition of early classical Japan preceding the establishment of patriarchal families. They argue that the royal court created the individual articles compiled within the Yōrō Code, including the *Ko ryō*, in order to facilitate a smooth succession of tax responsibilities to the next generation rather than aiming to establish a patriarchal family model.[48]

Family during the Heian period

During the Heian period, it became customary in aristocratic society to inherit socio-political status through the paternal lineage.[49] Clans were reorganized into groups based on patrilineal principles and succession.[50] According to Fukutō Sanae, the royal family's changing perspective toward their genealogy led to the establishment of a new succession principle, based on the idea that the throne should be transferred to patrilineal direct descendants, who represented the legitimate royal line. Some prestigious aristocratic houses, such as the Fujiwara, generated "branch lineages," each of which consisted of family members descended from a politically powerful individual who had attained high official rank. For example, the Kajūji line was a branch lineage descended from Fujiwara no Takafuji, a grandfather of Daigo (885–930, r. 897–930), who achieved an inner minister position. During the mid-Heian period, upper-level male aristocrats began to receive promotions to the fifth rank at their coming of age. The purpose of this custom was to transfer political status (i.e., an official court post) from father to son, and to maintain such paternal-based privilege over time. By the end of the eleventh century, the concept of the *ie* had been established based on official posts transferred through paternal succession.[51]

Middle- and lower-ranking officials began transferring their specialized capacities, such as scholarly knowledge and administrative skills, through these paternal successions. As shown by the case of the Ozuki, who passed down the post of Major Recorder of the Left (*sadaishi*) over many generations, members of specific families came to inherit certain official posts. Although men were the successors to family jobs and posts, some mid-Heian cases show that the posts of "female attendants from provincial elite families" were transferred from aunts to nieces.[52]

Heian marriage

At the end of the ninth century, the Fujiwara regents' house (*sekkanke*) began designating one of the family head's wives as the primary wife, a custom which became established during the mid-eleventh century.[53] After that, the first wife of the family head was called "*kita no mandokoro*." Although she established her own administrative office, her husband took it under his control.[54]

The circumstances of such *sekkanke* wives were therefore significantly different from those of high-ranking women of the Nara period, who independently managed their own administrative offices.

Selection of wives for the monarch and the crown prince was highly political, because their marriages were closely tied to royal succession, and became the center of power struggles. While aristocrats had once respected the wishes of the marrying couples, from the mid-tenth century parents, especially fathers, began dictating their children's marriages. The sovereign, the crown prince, and other royals and aristocrats began conducting marriage ceremonies during the second half of the ninth century, and such rituals became customary by the end of the tenth century. Starting from the first night of sharing a bed, marriage rituals culminated in the most important event of eating "the third night cakes."

Marriage to the sovereign involved the woman moving into his palace. Royal marriage therefore was designated as "receiving the bride." Other male aristocrats, however, visited the bride's residence, where her family held marriage rituals. In this sense, aristocratic marriage involved "receiving a groom." In some cases, the husband began living in his wife's residence immediately after the marriage; but many married couples lived separately, and husbands continued to simply visit their wives periodically. Although married couples sometimes moved to a residence prepared by the husband after a period of separate living, they never lived with his parents.[55]

The concept of adultery also emerged for the first time during the Heian period. From the mid-Heian period onward, a man who had a sexual liaison with a married woman could suffer violent retribution. This suggests that husbands had increased their control over their wives' sexuality. Moreover, from around the tenth century, historical sources began discussing rape, and recording references to women who were selling sex.[56]

Labor and the economy during the Heian period

By exploring different ways in which women assumed political power at the Heian court and within the family, recent scholarship argues that even though women had been excluded from "public" spaces since the ninth century, they had in fact continued to participate in court politics through alternative means to make themselves stay influential. For example, Carole Cavanaugh examines how the roles played by Heian noblewomen in producing textile arts constructed a foundation of court ideology and hierarchy, showing that women had opportunities to gain influence.[57]

Other scholars claim that when official court posts became unavailable to women, the authority of the mother of the sovereign became important during the mid-Heian period.[58] By becoming female attendants to influential queen-consorts, aristocrat women also experienced additional opportunities to participate in court affairs.[59] These changes enabled women to exercise significant political power and play important roles at court.

Inheritance patterns have been also an important topic in family history. Takamure closely examined Heian courtier journals to investigate how women inherited residences. Fukutō discovered that women and men inherited almost equally during the era, and more than 30 percent of land sellers were women. She also showed, however, that women did not even constitute 10 percent of land buyers. Based on this, she concluded that women faced more difficulties in protecting their properties and actively participating in economic activities than men, who could use their official positions as leverage for maintaining their economic influence. She theorized that women received inheritance precisely because they faced challenges in acquiring and preserving new wealth.[60]

Outside the capital, commoner women played important economic roles as female village leaders (*sato toji*). In 1983, a wooden tablet that recorded a district chief's order to mobilize

villagers for planting rice paddies was excavated from the Attame *jōri* site in Iwaki City, Fukushima prefecture. The recipient of this order was the *satotoji* in the mid-ninth century. Although women had been excluded from formal posts, such as village head, they nonetheless acted as leaders and assumed important tasks such as organizing the labor force.[61]

Nevertheless, as the *ritsuryō* tax collection system, based on rice field distribution and residence unit register records, fell apart, affluent families at the local level also developed a patriarchal *ie* system.[62] Male members of these affluent local families, called "*tato*," took on the roles of supervising cultivation and submitting taxes. Since "*tato*" was an official tax collector position, names of male representatives were registered in the records, and women were said to have been excluded.

Directions for future research

This chapter has provided a historical overview of family and gender in classical Japan, covering from the Jōmon to the Heian periods. It has also shown that the status of women and the characteristics of the classical Japanese family were different from those which developed under the Chinese dynasties of the same time periods.

As mentioned at the beginning, scholars in Japan had long examined Japanese family history in relation to the history of its state formation. They believed that it was important to examine when both private property and the patriarchal system developed in Japan, as these were essential conditions for state formation.[63] Since these scholars believed that the establishment of the patriarchal system increased male dominance, they hypothesized that women's status significantly diminished when the Japanese state was formed. They thereby made no serious effort to conduct a close examination of women's roles.

Classical Japanese women, however, held economic and political rights enabling them to maintain independence from male control. This situation was very different from that of women in many other societies. Recent scholarship also supports the conclusion that classical Japan was a bilateral society. Based on these reasons, newer scholars challenge the existing theory that women had already been under control of patriarchs at the time of the state formation.

With the use of interdisciplinary approaches, scholars of women's and gender history have advanced our understanding about classical Japanese women's status, roles, and other social aspects that shaped their lives. For example, these scholars incorporated archaeological evidence and scientific analysis to reveal the existence of female chieftains in Japan. Furthermore, they have been conducting comparative research on women's social status in various societies including Japan, the Korean peninsula, China, and other parts of north Asia. To further understand characteristics of family and gender in prehistoric and classical Japan, future scholarship should continue to apply interdisciplinary approaches and incorporate comparative analyses to examine political, economic, and labor conditions of women.

Notes

1 Takamure Itsue, *Takamure Itsue zenshū 1: Bokeisei no kenkyū*; Takamure Itsue, *Takamure Itsue zenshū 2–3: Shōseikon no kenkyū*. *Bokeisei no kenkyū* was originally published in 1938, and *Shōseikon no kenkyū* was originally published in 1953. See also Sekiguchi Hiroko, *Nihon kodai kazokushi no kenkyū*, vol. 2.

2 William H. McCullough, "Japanese Marriage Institutions in the Heian Period." A decade and a half later, Peter Nickerson expanded on McCullough's work, arguing that the matrilocal/uxorilocal marriage patterns favored by Heian aristocrats served to soften and diffuse patrilineally transmitted power. While status, he contended, descended through male lines (along with surnames), incorporation of sons-in-law into the households of their fathers-in-law effectively divided "possession" from "ownership" of status and power: Power derived from status, which was owned by the paternal side and could only be

exercised in the name of patrilineal line; but it was physically possessed by the maternal line, which provided the material support necessary to wield it. Nickerson, "The Meaning of Matrilocality, Kinship Property, and Politics in Mid-Heian."

3 Sekiguchi Hiroko, "Rekishigaku ni okeru joseishi kenkyū no igi."
4 Yoshida Takashi, *Ritsuryō kokka to kodai no shakai*.
5 Tsude Hiroshi, "Genshidoki to josei."
6 Ogasawara Yoshihiko, "Kokka keiseiki no josei"; Sahara Makoto, "Dōtaku no bi." Also see Tsude, "Genshidoki to josei."
7 Nishino Yukiko, "Genshi shakai to jendā."
8 For example see Kondō Yoshirō, "Kyōdōtai to tan'i shūdan," (originally published as a journal article in 1959); Tsude Hiroshi, *Nihon nōkō shakai no seiritsu katei*.
9 See Fujisawa Atsushi, "Jūkyo to shūraku." This study presents the historiography concerning the theory of a "unilateral descent group." It also presents the current view incorporating the new findings from the Kuroimine Site.
10 Kobayashi Yukio, "Kofun no hassei no rekishiteki igi," originally published in 1955.
11 Imai Takashi, "Kofun jidai zenki ni okeru josei no chii," originally published in 1982.
12 Seike Akira, *Kofun jidai no maisō genri to shinzoku kōzō*. For recent English-language scholarship on Himiko and her kingdom, see Gina Lee Barnes, *State Formation in Japan: Emergence of a 4th-Century Ruling Elite*; J. Edward Kidder, *Himiko and Japan's Elusive Chiefdom of Yamatai: Archaeology, History, and Mythology*; Yoshie Akiko, "Gendered Interpretations of Female Rule: The Case of Himiko, Ruler of Yamatai."
13 Seike, *Kofun jidai no maisō genri to shinzoku kōzō*.
14 Tanaka Yoshiyuki, *Kofun jidai shinzoku kōzō no kenkyū*.
15 See Seike, *Kofun jidai no maisō genri to shinzoku kōzō*.
16 Yoshie Akiko, *Nihon kodai joseishiron*. Gotō Michiko has proven that the custom of burying the husband and wife in the same grave was established among aristocrats during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; see *Sengoku wo ikita kuge no tsuma tachi*.
17 Yoshie, *Nihon kodai joseishiron*.
18 See Yoshie Akiko, *Nihon kodai keifu Yōshikiron*.
19 Mizoguchi Mutsuko, "Kiki ni mieru joseizō"; Yoshie Akiko, *Tsukurareta Himiko*.
20 Positions on this issue varied, however. G. Cameron Hurst (*Insei: Abdicated Sovereigns in the Politics of Late Heian Japan, 1086–1185*), for example, embraced the notion that female monarchs came to the throne primarily as placeholders for sons or grandsons, but did not relegate them to a passive role once they had ascended. E. Patricia Tsurumi, ("The Male Present versus the Female Past: Historians and Japan's Ancient Female Emperors"), on the other hand, rejected all components of the thesis.
21 Araki Toshio, *Kanōsei to shite no jotei*.
22 Many scholars, including Satō Nagato, support the "interim ruler" theory, but Araki Toshio, Yoshie Akiko, and Nitō Atsushi argue that both men and women became rulers because they had the necessary ability, experience, and age to reign. See Araki Toshio et al., "Zadankai: Kodai jotei kenkyū no genzai." In English, see Hurst, *Insei*, 36–100; and Tsurumi, "Male Present versus Female Past."
23 Yoshie Akiko, "Nihon kodai no jotei to shakai."
24 See, for example, Joan R. Piggott, "Chieftain Pairs and Corulers: Female Sovereignty in Early Japan." See also Joan R. Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*.
25 The Yōrō Laws on Residential Units are included in Inoue Mitsusada et al., *Nihon shisō taikei 3: Ritsuryō*. A detailed analysis, and an English translation, of the statute appears in Yoshie Akiko et al., "Gender in the Japanese Administrative Code Part 1: Laws on Residence Units."
26 The residence unit registers and provincial population registers are included in *Dainihon komonjo shōsōin monjo*, vols. 1 and 24; and Takeuchi Rizō, *Nara ibun*, vol. 1. These printed versions, however, have pages out of order, so please refer to updates in reprinted versions and newer studies for more correct information. For example see *Shōsōin mokuroku 1–7*. In 2015, the Historiographical Institute at the University of Tokyo also constructed a *Shōsōin* document database (*Shōsōin monjo maruchi shien dētabēsu*) available online at wwwap.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/ships/shipscontroller. This site is very useful because it provides accurate printed versions of the *Shōsōin* documents and new research on the documents.
27 Tōma Seita, "Kodai kokka," originally published in 1943. See also Ishimoda Shō, "Kodai kazoku no keisei katei," originally published in 1942.
28 Kishi Toshio, "Ritsuryōsei no shakai kikō," originally published in 1952.
29 Araki Moriaki, "Handen nōmin no sonzai keitai to kodai sekichō no bunseki hōhō," originally published in 1969. According to Nanbu Noboru, although the residence unit registers suggest that surnames were

important for the *ritsuryō* government, the registers did not show an attempt by the government to comprehend actual residence patterns of cultivators by recording them in "the same household" (*dōseki*) or separating them into "different households" (*besseki*). See Nanbu Noboru, *Nihon kodai koseki no kenkyū*. For debates on the nature of the household registers, see Sugimoto Kazuki, *Nihon kodai monjo no kenkyū*.

30 Sekiguchi, "Kafuchōsei kazoku no miseiritsu to nihon kodai shakai no tokushitsu ni tsuite," originally published in 1983. For an English version, see Sekiguchi, "The Patriarchal Family Paradigm in Eight-Century Japan."

31 Akashi Kazunori, *Nihon kodai no shinzoku kōzō*.

32 Yoshie, *Nihon kodai joseishiron*. Akashi argues that "mother and child plus father" was the smallest family unit. See Akashi, *Nihon kodai no shinzoku kōzō*.

33 Kobayashi Shigefumi, "Kodai kon'in girei no shūhen," originally published in 1990.

34 Sekiguchi, *Nihon kodai kon'inshi no kenkyū*. For a detailed discussion of this subject in English, see McCullough, "Japanese Marriage Institutions."

35 Misaki Yūko, "Kisaki no miya no sonzai keitai ni tsuite," originally published in 1988.

36 Hashimoto Yoshinori, "Nihon no kodai kyūto."

37 Shiga Shūzō, *Chūgoku kazokuhō no genri*.

38 Umemura Keiko, "Ritsuryō ni okeru josei meishō," originally published in 1979.

39 Endō Midori, "Ryōsei kisaki seido no seiritsu."

40 Yoshida, *Ritsuryō kokka to kodai no shakai*.

41 Fukutō Sanae, "Kodai no josei rōdō." Technically, *yō* was also a commutation of a corvée requirement, but in both China and Japan it was always collected in goods. The *ritsuryō* tax system is outlined in detail in Dana Morris, "Land and Society." For details on the *ritsuryō* military system, see Karl F. Friday, *Hired Swords: The Rise of Private Warrior Power in Early Japan* and William Wayne Farris, *Heavenly Warriors: the Evolution of Japan's Military, 500–1300*.

42 Sekiguchi, "Nihon kodai no kazoku keitai to josei no chii."

43 Kawane Yoshiyasu, "Seikatsu no henka to josei no shakaiteki chii."

44 Ijūin Yōko, *Kodai no josei kanryō*. During the early eighth century, women with fifth rank or above began receiving this privilege.

45 This information is based on a commentary, "Koki," which was created in 738.

46 Yoshida, *Ritsuryō kokka to kodai no shakai*.

47 Sekiguchi, "Kafuchōsei kazoku no miseiritsu to Nihon kodai shakai no tokushitsu ni tsuite."

48 Sakaue Yasutoshi, "Ritsuryō kokka no hō to shakai."

49 Under the Yōrō Code, the government implemented the "shadow rank" (*on'i*) system, in which the father's rank determined his son's starting rank at court.

50 Yoshie Akiko, *Nihon kodai no uji no kōzō*.

51 Fukutō, *Ie seiritsushi no kenkyū*.

52 Ijūin, *Kodai no josei kanryō*. Around the twelfth century, the role of raising curtains during the coronation ceremony for the throne or *kenchō* was exclusively performed by a certain pair of court members—a princess of the Shirakawahaku royal lineage and a second-level manager of the Office of Female Chamberlains who was also a wet nurse of the *tennō*. See Kuriyama Keiko, "Tenji shiron."

53 See Fukutō Sanae, *Heianchō no ie to josei*; Umemura Keiko, "Sekkanke no seisai."

54 Fukutō, *Heianchō no ie to josei*.

55 Fukutō, "'Ie' no seiritsu to jendā"; McCullough, "Japanese Marriage Institutions in the Heian Period."

56 Fukutō, "'Ie' no seiritsu to jendā." For further information about the sex trade in Japanese history, see Fukutō Sanae, "Nihon ni okeru baibaishun no seiritsu to henyō"; or Janet R. Goodwin, *Selling Songs and Smiles: The Sex Trade in Heian and Kamakura Japan*.

57 Cavanaugh, however, was not overly optimistic about women's power. By drawing on Peter Nickerson's study on web-like horizontal and vertical alliances based on matrilocal marriages, Cavanaugh underscores male-centered political maneuvers with the use of women as "pawns" in the context of the top-ranking aristocratic family. While Nickerson suggests negotiated power relations between men and women, Cavanaugh challenges the idea of "male-female cooperation in the deployment of uxorilocal residential assets, particularly cloth wealth." See Carole Cavanaugh, "Text and Textile: Unweaving the Female Subject in Heian Writing"; Nickerson, "The Meaning of Matrilocality."

58 See, for example, Fukutō Sanae, "From Female Sovereign to Mother of the Nation: Women and Government in the Heian Period."

59 Yoshikawa Shinji, "Heian jidai ni okeru nyōbō no sonzai keitai," originally published in 1995.

60 Fukutō, *Ie seiritsushi no kenkyū*; Fukutō, "'Ie' no seiritsu to jendā." Wakita Haruko's English-language "Marriage and Property in Premodern Japan from the Perspective of Women's History," and Suzanne Gay's introduction to that article, provide a useful overview and historiography of premodern Japanese women's property rights.
61 Kobayashi Shōji, *Nihon kodai no sonraku to nōmin shikai*; Yoshie, *Nihon kodai joseishiron*; Yoshie Akiko, "Gender in Early Classical Japan: Marriage, Leadership, and Political Status in Village and Palace."
62 Kawane, "Seikatsu no henka to josei no shakaiteki chii."; Fukutō, "'Ie' no seiritsu to jendā."
63 The materialistic view of history proposed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels greatly influenced these Japanese historians specialized in the history of Japanese state formation. For an English translation of Engels' original work, see Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

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14
Heian-kyō
From royal center to metropole

Joan R. Piggott

The history of Japan's old capital at Kyoto, now a favorite venue for world tourism and recently listed as ninth by *The Japan Times* (6/25, 2016) among today's most livable cities, needs more attention. Kyoto served as the center of the realm of the Heavenly Sovereign (*tennō*; most commonly rendered in English as emperor) from the turn of the ninth century through the late nineteenth century, when the monarch moved east to today's Tokyo.

There is a substantial body of scholarship on Kyoto's urban history in Japanese, but work in Western languages remains limited. In French, Nicolas Fiévé has provided the magnificently illustrated *Atlas Historique de Kyoto*, which gives readers a good sense of Kyoto's changing geography and built environment through time. In English, Matthew Stavros has published *Kyoto: An Urban History of Japan's Premodern Capital*. The focus of the latter, however, is mostly on the medieval age, leaving much to be said about Kyoto's classical era, from its establishment by Kanmu in 794 up through the twelfth century, when retired monarchs came to function as court leaders. My purpose here is to discuss prominent themes and trajectories while also pointing readers toward useful research on Heian-period Kyoto.

Fundamentals of urban history

In *The Social Construction of Ancient Cities*, urban archaeologist Monica Smith and others discuss key issues for urban history such as origins, relationships between early cities and states, diverse urban forms through time and space, and the social transformations experienced by urban dwellers through time. As prominent urban characteristics, Smith lists: aggregation of population; increasing scale, specialization, and intensification of subsistence needs; visible signs of significant stratification; and public monuments. As urban functions, Smith describes how provisioning requires residents to create far-reaching social and economic networks. Cities as the hubs of such networks generate collective beliefs that influence the hinterland, and their dwellers form what Smith calls "a moral community" with a long-term investment in consensus. That consensus is constructed and maintained by activities in spaces where urban residents assemble, such as the marketplace or at public rituals.[1]

Smith and her colleagues also frequently cite detailed criteria articulated by Gordon Childe (1892–1957) to identify excavated urban sites: a dense population; the presence of full-time

non-agrarian specialists who rely on others for provisions; use of tithes or taxes from agricultural producers to support the ruler; the existence of monumental buildings as well as workshops, warehouses, and granaries that evidence surplus production and labor; elite support for specialists, who benefit the ruled in terms of planning and organization; literacy and record-keeping, enabling clerks to develop predictive sciences such as arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy; craftsmen and artists supported by surplus and thus able to develop sophisticated styles; regular foreign trade in raw materials over long distances; and settled craftsmen serving the ruler.[2] Notably these criteria go beyond Max Weber's well known emphasis on the city as a market center, Gideon Sjoberg's focus on the city as the ruler's center, and Harold Carter's vision of the city as religious center.[3] Smith and her colleagues, building on Childe's work, argue for broad and multifaceted study of global urban history.

Satō Makoto argues that a regional perspective is important too. Specifically, Japan's earliest cities were royal capitals that were strongly influenced by Chinese royal centers where the Son of Heaven established his palace, managed administration, and provided ritual and cultural leadership for the realm known as "All Under Heaven." Japan's capital builders began working from this template in the late seventh century, first at Fujiwara (694–710), and then at Heijō (710–784), Nagaoka (784–794), and Heian (794–1868).

Satō, like Smith and her colleagues, argues against a narrow definition of urban function:

> It used to be that Japan's classical cities were imagined as assemblages of aristocratic residences without any developed economic base or autonomous populations. It was even thought that they could not be considered cities at all. But since the 1960s, as the excavation of Heijō (Nara) proceeded, a clearer and more detailed picture emerged. Indeed, there are few classical cities for which our archaeological knowledge is as great. Its residents lived in the midst of a very large population, an agglomeration of wealth, specialization of labor, and a developed circulating economy. That Heijō should be considered a classical city (*kodai toshi*) is now accepted. Still we need to understand and articulate its shape and role as an East Asian city. Residents may not have had an independent economy and its craftsmen and merchants were not fully independent from political and religious institutions. … Given that, I want to think about how we can talk about an "East Asian classical city."[4]

In a similar vein, the East Asian architectural historian Chye Kiang Heng has proposed what he calls "a new urban paradigm" for the East Asian region. He argues for a trajectory of urban development that proceeds this way. The Tang capital of Changan (today's Xian) in northwestern China was a rigorously controlled aristocratic city with walled wards and numerous symbolic elements—it was what he calls a "closed capital city" during the seventh and early eighth centuries. By the tenth century, however, the Song-dynasty capital at Kaifeng had become an "open capital city" that was street-centered, mercantile, and less controlled by government authorities. Important for the discussion here, Heng thinks that this trajectory from closed to more open cities can be seen elsewhere across East Asia, including in Japan.[5] I have found Heng's paradigm suggestive for tracing developments in Heian-kyō during Heian times.

Kyoto in Japan's urban tradition

The archaeologist Yamanaka Akira has articulated a five-stage model for Japan's royal capitals from the seventh through the twelfth centuries. It puts Kyoto's history in context and suggests long-term trajectories of its urban development.[6]

1 The first stage, the "prototypical capital," emerged in the mid-seventh century in southeastern Yamato at Asuka.

While Asuka was a palace center (*kyūto)* for Yamato kings, it did not yet have a space for the assembly of large groups of officials nor did it have the rectangular cityscape characteristic of Chinese-style royal centers.[7]

2 The second stage, the Fujiwara capital that was Japan's first Chinese-style royal center (*tojō*), was established in 704 in the Asuka vicinity by the monarch Tenmu (r. 672–686) and his wife-successor, Jitō (r. 690–697). Key developments there included construction of a Chinese-style rectangular cityscape with a grid of great streets laid out north to south and east to west, and with its east and west sectors separated by a grand central avenue. The royal palace—a large complex of buildings for royal residence, ritual assembly, and administration of the realm by officialdom—was located at its center. There were two official markets east and west, and multiple official Buddhist temples within the perimeter. House lots in the vicinity of the royal palace were distributed to officials according to their ranks.[8]

3 The third stage, the eighth-century capital at Heijō (Nara), was situated northwest of Fujiwara in the Yamato basin. It situated the royal palace at north center, and included official markets, gridded streets, diplomatic lodges, and multiple official temples.[9] Over the century the layout of the palace changed, as did the operation of the monarchy, reflecting increasing influence from Tang China—Furuse Natsuko and others have called the result "Tangification (*Tōka*)."[10] Courtiers and royal relatives received plots of land outside the palace precincts and enjoyed relatively autonomous economic lives based on taxes collected from prebendal residence units (*fuko*) and private holdings outside the capital—their lifestyles were not yet fully urban. And their special privileges at official markets and production centers are thought to have obstructed development of a circulating economy. Most lower ranked nobles resided outside the capital. Researchers estimate the population at 100,000. Since the royal center at Heijō was provisioned primarily by the *ritsuryō* command economy based on taxes in kind, Yamanaka does not consider Heijō a city (*toshi*) in the Weberian sense.[11] And unlike Chinese capitals, it had no wall—defense from external enemies was not a major concern for the young *ritsuryō* monarchy.

4 The fourth stage, the "middle capital," was established at Heian-kyō in Yamashiro province, north of Heijō, in 794.[12] There royal government worked to consolidate its control by weakening the nobility politically and economically. Urban residents were registered in capital residence units (*kyōko)*. Noble residences were allotted plots to the east and west of the palace precincts at north center. Among them were also located official compounds for production, storage, and housing for royal craftsmen and workers such as weavers, carpenters, guards, and palanquin bearers.[13] These compounds were densely populated—when one burned in 808, 180 structures were reportedly lost. Lower officials shared cramped quarters—in one instance each official is said to have had the sleeping space of about one tatami mat. Moreover as population increased over time, lots for residence units shrank. By the later ninth century, despite the earlier successes of royal government over the nobility, its authority over land distribution, streets, markets, and residents waned, for reasons to be discussed below. Specialist artisans developed their own workshops and communities in this more open environment.

5 The fifth stage, that of the "late capital" from the tenth century onward, was characterized by the relative absence of government control. Official distribution of land plots had ceased, the walls of residential wards that had facilitated control of the populace in earlier times had crumbled, and government supervision of the marketplace had lapsed. Courtier aristocrats depended mostly on household economies based on their properties located outside the

capital. The character of the late capital changed considerably.[14] Yamanaka considers this fifth-stage capital as a city in the Weberian sense because it had become the market center of the realm.

The early Heian capital—ninth and tenth centuries

Recent researchers have pointed to the strong effects of an increasingly dynamic circulating economy on early Heian-kyō during the ninth and tenth centuries—engaging both elites and lower rankers, it weakened the *ritsuryō* command economy based on taxes in kind.[15] Ports along the Yodo River became busier as movement of goods and people between the capital and provinces expanded, with travelers utilizing new ferries, bridges, and other transport facilities. Such developments altered the codal assumption of a settled population that moved little.[16]

Evidence of resulting changes appears in official annals and supplementary laws (*kyaku*), including official orders concerning warehouses, markets, harbors, and commercial specialists. Protocols in the early tenth-century *Engi shiki* as well as entries in courtier journals like Fujiwara Tadahira's (880–949) *Teishinkōki* also indicate that the court was depending more on goods brought from distant Kyushu and the Inland Sea region.[17]

Archaeologists' excavations also show a growing gap between the material cultures of capital residents and those of the nearby countryside: urbanites used glazed ware brought in from Mino and Owari, beyond the inner provinces (Kinai), but rural dwellers did not.[18] Meanwhile artisans and merchants in the capital grew busier providing goods and services for urban elites and commoners alike.[19] The distinctive aristocratic residential architecture known as *shindenzukuri* was taking form, albeit without the elaborate pond-centered gardens that characterized later "mature *shindenzukuri*," as Takahashi Masaaki calls it.[20] While archaeological digs in today's densely populated Kyoto are limited in size, newly uncovered sites constantly provide new clues to how urban life changed as the monarchy and its courtiers became permanently urbanized.[21] Indeed, Hotate Michihisa considers the urban monarchy (*toshi ōken*) with its urbanized aristocrats (*toshi kizoku*) as the primary agents of change at the time.[22] The sovereign, his ministers, and lesser officials with their households large and small were all consumers of goods and services brought from across the archipelago. Hotate also points to a supplementary law of 895 that prohibited sons and grandsons of nobles from taking up residence outside the capital. It confirmed, he thinks, growing consciousness of the gulf in status between urban rulers and rural subjects. About this same time, tax-paying residence units (*kyōko*) disappear from the historical record, replaced by "resident households" (*zaike*) that paid rent to government offices or nobles as their landlord. The latter was a clear vector of aristocratization.

Research on governance and labor organization in early Heian-kyō by Kitamura Masaki and Kushiki Yoshinori has shown too how new challenges altered both court administration and social organization. For instance, code writers had not provided for dealing with inadequate and aging infrastructure—there are few references to either in the eighth century annal, *Shoku Nihongi*. By the ninth century, however, the court had to order officials and residents to work together to clean and maintain streets, curbs, ditches, river embankments, and bridges. This was no small task—in 828 there were 370 bridges in the capital. Serious flooding in 855 also led to calls for deepening ditches throughout the capital, another huge undertaking.[23] Authorities in the right and left capital agencies (*Ukyōshiki*, *Sakyōshiki*) found themselves hard pressed to gather the needed resources and labor. As one strategy, in 827 unused land was to be rented out so that proceeds could be used for such costs. That had the unhappy effects, however, not only of making the royal center look like the countryside; cultivators also tended to make holes in dikes and canals to irrigate their fields, thereby weakening riparian defenses. Still another issue was

marshaling the labor to dig out latrines: Yamanaka Akira has concluded that "a flushing culture" developed at official venues by the late eighth century, but keeping it functioning proved challenging.[24]

Another serious concern for His Majesty and capital officials was that then as now a permanent urban population needed a safety net to protect it from disruptions in provisioning. Kushiki Yoshinori considers records of frequent official almsgiving as proof of the court's emerging consciousness of the need for urban policy.[25] Threats to law and order were also increasingly frequent in the mid-ninth century—even the royal processional Suzaku Boulevard was blighted by crime. When the use of official guards failed, in 895 the court ordered noble households to assist the capital police office (*kebiishi-chō*) in overseeing the peace of streets and neighborhoods.[26] Kitamura has pointed out that this resort to help from noble households signified weakening official control.

Moving into the tenth century the record reveals how urban residents were organizing and participating in activities to seek spiritual protection: they were assembling for festivals at shrines just outside the capital—specifically those of the Kamo, Hirano, and Inariyama shrines. These events functioned as "generative venues," in Monica Smith's parlance, for new urban communities of belief and consensus. Ichikawa Rie has noted, for instance, how the Inariyama Shrine festival on the southern perimeter of the capital brought capital dwellers together in the third month—participants included middling and lower officials as well as non-officials residing between the Fifth and Ninth wards.[27] The mixing of official and non-official residents during the celebration gave capital dwellers opportunities to meet while creating their own networks of status and wealth beyond those led by court government.

Another occasion at which urban residents came together for their own rituals were Departed Spirit Rituals (*goryōe*). After the court initiated the practice in the Shinsen'en garden in 863, subsequent events—including sutra-reading, prayers, and various sorts of entertainments for the deities—were organized by and for capital residents in the spring and summer months, when fear of flood-borne illnesses was great. *Goryōe* can be seen as replacing earlier codal banishing rites (*ōharae*) that had been planned and performed quite visibly in the streets by *ritsuryō* officials during the sixth and twelfth months to cleanse the royal center of spiritual pollution. By the later ninth century, however, such rites were being performed inside the palace, and specifically for the monarch himself.[28] In contrast the *goryōe* were for the well-being of urban residents high and low; and they brought the residents out of their homes to pray together for their own delivery from disease. Such events would certainly have stimulated a sense of community for participants.

Although the court tried to assert its control over all such religious events with patronage, splendid displays of its wealth and status, and controlling laws, the frequent complaints in court records about crime and carnivalesque behavior make it clear that at least some participants saw themselves as outsiders from His Majesty's courtly society during festival time.

The mid-Heian capital—the tenth and eleventh centuries

Toda Yoshimi and Hotate Michihisa have characterized tenth- and eleventh-century Heian-kyō as a "court-centered city" (*ōchō toshi*). Therein aristocratic households became ever more influential due to the powerful patronage networks they built up to administer absentee landholdings called estates (*shōen*). For Toda and Hotate, this was the time when the royal center of Heian-kyō became a "city" with a more developed economy.

Toda provides this narrative. During the tenth century, monarchs, ministers, and official religious institutions lacked adequate support from the *ritsuryō* command economy. In response, by

the early eleventh century they were gaining more of their livelihoods as absentee proprietors (*ryōshu*) of landed estates in the provinces. This strategy required the knitting together of networks of associates and clients across the archipelago—including provincial governors, transport and storage specialists, and provincial elites—all of whom aided in establishing and administering estates by assuring production, collecting rents and other revenues, and shipping them back to proprietors in the capital.[29]

Ōyama Kyōhei has noted too that in the increasingly aristocratic environment at court, those in the countryside found it difficult to secure needed certificates of ownership for their fields. To protect themselves from confiscation or excessive taxation by provincial authorities, those with the connections to do so negotiated ties with aristocrats, to whom they paid rents and other services.[30] For Toda and Hotate, the developing *shōen* economy of the eleventh century was a particularly important vector in transforming the capital into an economic hub for aristocratic wealth and power while diffusing the authority of monarch and court in what has been called the "court-centered polity" (*ōchō kokka*).[31]

In Heian-kyō, aristocratic proprietors had increasing wealth to recruit specialist craftsmen, once exclusively affiliated with the royal palace. We hear, for instance, that in 1039 silk weavers were working for the Fujiwara regents' household as well as the royal household, sometimes resulting in quarrels over priorities. In this more competitive environment, the prosperity of such specialists grew. Meanwhile the market economy in the capital and environs expanded as these fully urbanized specialists needed goods and services too. Wakita Haruko argues that it was precisely this new organization of production in mid-Heian that was the foundation for the medieval city of Kyoto.[32]

The movement of goods by land and sea as well as reliable warehousing and exchange became significant concerns for absentee urban proprietors. Ōyama Kyōhei has pointed out how various places around the Kinai developed as transport hubs at this time.[33] Provincial governors (*zuryō*), long involved in moving tax goods and corvée laborers to the capital, served as logistics experts for high-ranking patrons like the regents who led the court.

The cityscape itself was transformed as wealthy governors lived more grandly than had their predecessors. Rather than residing on one-quarter *chō* plots as in the past, successful provincial governors, whose daughters often married into their patron's family, now enjoyed grander homes including blocks of storehouses that covered a full *chō* (120 square meters). In this environment, Kushiki thinks that the cost of land in the Left Capital rose steadily during the eleventh century.[34]

Increasing density of occupancy meant new problems—indeed the year 960 saw the first in a devastating series of fires that incinerated parts or all of the royal palace precincts time and again during the tenth and eleventh centuries. As a result many monarchs began spending considerable time living outside the original Residential Palace (*dairi*), either in retirement palaces or in the mansions of their leading ministers. These "town palaces" (*satodairi*) meant that the original palace ceased to be the architectonic center and representation of His Majesty's capital.[35]

Shigeta Shin'ichi and other researchers think that the deserted Residential Palace and precincts weakened royal legitimacy—he cites occasions in the early eleventh century when commoners invaded the palace grounds during official rites.[36] A contemporary witness agreed. In 982 the retired official and literatus Yoshishige Yasutane (?–1003) complained that the royal center was no longer ideal in either appearance or governance. In his memoir *Record of the Pond Pavilion* (*Chiteiki*) Yoshishige bemoaned in particular that "Heaven has devastated the western capital." Archaeologists think that Yoshishige was exaggerating somewhat, but as early as 840 there is a report that few people were living in the swampy Right Capital. Yoshishige mourned too that Heian-kyō had become a royal center where aristocratic proprietors enjoyed the greatest authority

and prosperity, and where urban decay, fires, crime, and poverty reflected the failure of proper royal governance. He described too how oligarchs of the Fujiwara regents' clique in the Left Capital were wealthy enough to enlist unlimited servants and guards, but lower officials like himself could only retreat to solitary plots in the lower Left Capital, where he retired to his Pond Pavilion.[37]

Other signs of serious social disaffection included street protests by supporters of religious institutions such as Ise Shrine and official temple-monasteries such as Kōfukuji and Enryakuji. In that regard, Mikael Adolphson explains how monastic thinkers of the time were proclaiming the equality of the King's Law and Buddha's Law (*ōhō buppō*), a profound change in mentalité from the eighth-century *ritsuryō* Laws on Monks and Nuns (*sōniryō*), which had proclaimed the monarch preeminent over the Buddhist establishment.[38] Takahashi Masaaki has suggested too that the number of great religious institutions founded outside the capital in the ninth and tenth centuries, including Iwashimizu (estab. 860), Ninnaji (estab. 886), Daigoji (estab. 874), as well as various noble cloisters on Mount Hiei diluted the spiritual primacy of the royal capital.[39] And in the capital itself the appearance of the Amidist proselytizer Kūya (?–964), "holy man of the marketplace," is one more sign of developing urban culture as well as an indicator of looser government control over the streets. Although public preaching had been forbidden by the *ritsuryō* codes, Kūya seems not to have faced serious complaints.[40]

In a significant departure from the past, tenth-century capital residents created new ritual stages within the capital perimeter for use during shrine festivals. We hear, for instance, of the *tabidokoro* where the Inariyama deity's palanquin was carried and parked for propitiation. Also associated with that festival, nighttime entertainments in the streets, once forbidden, were customary by the 950s. High-ranked courtiers continued to complain about the street singing, dancing, eating, drinking, and other mischief, but even court emissaries and official guards ignored sumptuary prohibitions and engaged in extravagant spending on raiment, carriages, and outriders.[41]

This lack of control resulted in violence at times. In the third month of 995, for instance, the Matsunoo festival, based at the shrine west of the capital, witnessed brawling between shrine supporters and onlookers from the Yodo-Yamazaki vicinity south of the capital.[42] An increasing sense of "insider" versus "outsider" may have been the reason that the term "capital resident" (*kyōjū*) began to appear in the historical record of the time. Their households were being taxed to support specific court offices, night patrols by the *kebiishi*, and even His Majesty's table.[43] Meanwhile local notables called *tone* were functioning as neighborhood bosses. They had low or no rank but served as local liaisons with the *kebiishi*.

This environment of a city under less control produced what literary historian Fukuzawa Tōru calls a new literary genre, that of "urban literature" (*toshi bungaku*).[44] One striking instance of the genre is the *Shinsarugakuki* ("New Monkey Music"), a prose essay composed around 1050. Thought to have been written by the literatus and royal tutor Fujiwara Akihira (?–1066), *Shinsarugakuki* provides lively and humorous accounts of street entertainments as well as detailed descriptions of urban craftsmen and other specialists of the time, both men and women. Its cast of characters might be called "the human comedy" of mid-eleventh-century Kyoto. Among them appear a cabinet-maker, a master painter, a maker of Buddhist icons, a yin-yang diviner, a seer, a fuel provider, a calligrapher, and monk ritualists from both the Shingon and Tendai Buddhist schools. We also hear of products made and sold in the Seventh Ward, such as cloth, thread, swords, fans, saddles, bows, and quivers.[45]

Fortunately *Shinsarugakuki* is not our only description of street life in the eleventh-century capital. In 1096 the minister Fujiwara Munetada (1062–1141) also described festival streets filled with field dancing (*dengaku*) in his *Chūyūki* journal, wherein the capital's modern name, "Kyoto,"

also appears for the first time. According to Munetada, urban dwellers of all strata, even the middling nobility, were participating energetically, and Toda Yoshimi considers the field-dancing craze of summer 1096 to have been "the first social movement in the history of city Kyoto."[46] Ministers like Munetada and Masafusa certainly wanted it suppressed, but since potential enforcers themselves were dancing in the streets, that was impossible. The court was clearly not in full control of capital streets.

Later Heian Kyoto—the twelfth century

Historians agree that in the late Heian capital a few great aristocratic households had become hubs of political and economic influence—Kuroda Toshio has called them "gates of power" (*kenmon;* see Chapter 8 in this volume). Following Kuroda's lead, historians frequently characterize late Heian Kyoto as "the gates-of-power city" (*kenmon toshi*).[47] The premier establishments were those of the senior retired monarch and the regent who cooperated in leading the court. As their sources of wealth and power, they depended on incomes from provincial estates as well as from proprietary provinces (*chigyōkoku*) for which they appointed the governors and from which they took taxes. Their clients included wealthy provincial governors as well as lower officials who did their bidding as housemen (*kenin*). They resided in walled palaces that were well protected, in contrast with the original Residential Palace of the sovereign, which had not been walled in. These great households kept treasures, supplies, and workshops in clusters of warehouses abutting their homes, and their status was such that they could shut out most authority other than their own.

Geographically the shape of the capital was changing too. In Shirakawa and Rokuhara to the east of the Kamo River, and to the south where the Kamo and Katsura rivers met at Toba, new royal retirement palaces were built and members of the monarch's faction as well as his servants and provisioners erected their own homes nearby. Meanwhile the Fujiwara Regents' house (*sekkanke*) developed its own retirement palace, temples, and burial sites at Uji, south of the capital, while the northern hills above First Ward Avenue were called home by lesser noble households.[48] At the same time the Right Capital was less populous, since most of the population was living in the Left Capital, differentiated between an upper elite sector and a lower sector for craftsmen and merchants from the Fifth to the Ninth wards. A good sense of this twelfth-century Heian-kyō, which archaeologist Yamada Kunikazu has dubbed "a galactic capital" (*eiseikyō*) because of its satellite suburbs, is afforded by the sizable model created for exhibit in 1994, on the occasion of the 1200th anniversary of the royal capital.

In two recent books Yamada has elaborated this process of expansion out to the new satellites, which Matthew Stavros calls "new palace-temple towns."[49] Beginning in 1077, Shirakawa Tennō started constructing his Hosshōji palace-temple complex across the Kamo River from Second Ward Avenue. When its nine-story octagonal tower was completed, Hosshōji became the capital's tallest landmark, visible far to the east as travelers on the Tōkaidō circuit road approached Kyoto.

In its royal patron's mind, the Hosshōji palace-temple complex likely represented the grand success of his new royal line: Shirakawa's heir was his son Horikawa (1079–1107; r. 1186–1107); and Horikawa's successor was Shirakawa's grandson, Toba (1103–1156, r. 1107–1123). Moreover Hosshōji, like Tōdaiji, Tōji, and Saiji in the past, served as a realm-protecting ritual center for official liturgies performed by prelates and other elite monks. It gave Shirakawa increased visibility as the Buddhist monarch of the realm, like great Nara rulers had been.[50] Great excitement has been stirred in recent years by excavations at Hosshōji, discovered underneath the Kyoto city zoo, as well as by discoveries of the gridded zone at Shirakawa. Likely, builders meant

to replicate the eastern extension at eighth-century Heijō where official temples such as Gangōji, Kōfukuji, and Tōdaiji had been built in that earlier capital.

In 1088 the satellite-building process moved on when Shirakawa initiated construction of his new retirement palace at Toba. And then several decades later the retired Go-Shirakawa (1127–1192; r. 1155–1158) built his Hōjūji-dono palace on the east side of the Kamo River at Seventh Ward Avenue. He moved in 1161, and subsequently added the Rengeōin chapel (alt. Sanjūsangendō), famed for its 1000 individually sculpted images of Kannon, Bodhisattva of Mercy. Nearby was the twenty-*chō* site of Rokuhara, where many of the Ise Taira chieftain Kiyomori's (1118–1181) armed followers were headquartered near Kūya's Rokuhara Mitsuji. Rokuhara was said to have had 3200 roofs by Kiyomori's time.[51] In contrast, across town to the northwest the remains in the old palace precincts across town were so dilapidated that it was being called "the royal-palace field" (*uchino*). Indeed when Toba asked his Council of State ministers to advise him as to whether the original palace should be rebuilt in 1112, they told him that town palaces were the norm. And by 1142 a literatus proclaimed that anyone important was by then residing east of the Kamo River.[52]

Where then was the work of government done in this era of town palaces and palace-temple satellites for the retired monarchs who led the court? Researchers have discovered from courtier journal entries that ministers worked at home. And after the young Toba monarch's accession in 1103, meetings of his senior nobles took place at the retired Shirakawa's palace, since he was the child's guardian and head of the royal family. Provincial governors worked in home offices as well—in 1102 the governor of the rich province of Ōmi was said to have had an office and five storehouses at his residence.[53]

None of this was particularly new in the twelfth century—the lieutenant governor described in *Shinsarugakuki* was described as having storehouses full of treasures at his home. Records indicate too that many such warehouses were destroyed in a cataclysmic fire of 1177, when 180 *chō* burned in the Left Capital.[54] That is undoubtedly why the retired monarch Go-Shirakawa maintained clusters of storehouses at several different sites inside and outside the capital.

High standards of consumption by *kenmon* and lesser aristocratic households drove the economy of the twelfth-century metropole and the provinces that provisioned it. The viceroy Fujiwara Tadazane (1078–1162), for example, was the proprietor of a host of estates in nineteen provinces that produced or procured a wide variety of rents for him, in the form of all sorts of laborers, foodstuffs, timber, food for livestock, matting, cushions, salt, silk, paper, clothing, lamp oil, and torches. Sachiko Kawai has demonstrated as well how the household of Go-Shirakawa's daughter, Senyōmon'in (1181–1252), depended on goods shipped to her regularly from various estates.[55]

It is this provisioning system that gave rise to what Toda has called "the estate-based city," that is, the metropole as economic hub.[56] Senior retired monarchs, regents, and their associates had the power and wealth to call on resources and labor from all strata across the realm. So they were able to build grand homes roofed with tiles shipped from distant Sanuki in the Inland Sea; they ate their meals on prized ceramic ware from Owari (today's Nagoya); and they consumed delicacies from distant parts and served on imported Chinese porcelain. Commoners too gained from the lack of constraints in this more open capital: they expanded their homes and shops over once-sacrosanct paths and ditches, and they even worshipped in Buddhist chapels meant for commoners such as the Rokkakudō and Inabadō, despite earlier prohibitions against such temples in the capital.[57]

The lack of firm controls and hierarchy, while liberating some residents of the twelfth-century metropole, also increased tensions within and between the vertical factions that constituted the *kenmon* blocs; and the threat of violence made capital residents, powerful and not, more dependent on military commanders like Taira Kiyomori and his rival, Minamoto Yoshitomo (1123–1160).

The resulting militarization meant that Kiyomori could afford his own more sumptuous residence and storehouses in Rokuhara as well as in the west Eighth Ward, where Kiyomori's precincts are said to have included up to fifty buildings in a zone 120 meters square.[58] After quarrels with the monarch Go-Shirakawa and success in putting his own grandson on the throne as Go-Shirakawa's successor in 1180, Kiyomori was in position to propose moving the capital away from Heian, to the port at Ōwada (Fukuhara), in today's Kobe on the Inland Sea. The plan failed, however, as did the attempt by Kiyomori and his heir to maintain court leadership, with the result that Heian-kyō remained the capital throughout the medieval age and beyond.

Moving from uptown to downtown in the Left Capital, Nishiyama Ryōhei has used a wide array of evidence from didactic tales (*setsuwa*), ritual handbooks, courtier journals, chronicles, dictionaries, illustrated scrolls, and archaeological reports to reconstruct images of the lifeways of commoner households in the Fifth Ward and below.[59] While the old wards of the earlier *ritsuryō* capital had walled-in residents with guards at gates (*bōmon*) and strict controls, by later Heian times neighborhoods in the lower capital had residents openly facing each other across main streets. Indeed the mid-twelfth-century dictionary *Iroha jiruisho* identifies homes in these neighborhoods as *machiya*, "shop-keepers' houses."[60] Our best images of these houses come from the late twelfth-century *Nenjūgyōji emaki* ("Illustrated Scroll of Annual Court Events") that was commissioned by the retired monarch Go-Shirakawa.[61] Nishiyama has concluded that by later Heian times patriarchal house-heads came to exercise strong decision-making rights for their homes and property—in other words, this era saw the emergence of patriarchal marriage and family structures in the capital—while such householdheads also joined together to respond to fires, robbers, and street fighting.[62] Those without homes were coming to be considered "non-human" (*hinin*; see Chapter 19). They were organized in camps (*shuku*) along with orphans and the indigent sick. Nishiyama's research shows a darker side of the "glorious Heian-kyō" image so familiar to readers of courtly narratives like *The Tale of Genji*.

Conclusion

Yamanaka Akira's five-stage model of urban development in Japan's royal centers provides the context and trajectories that are the focus of current research on Heian-period Kyoto. We have seen that the capital was established by Kanmu in 794. According to the *ritsuryō* codes, the palace and royal officials were its primary residents; and their status, livelihoods, and provisioning were all controlled by the royal government, which they themselves constituted. Provisioning needs were met by tax stuffs and court-associated specialists.

Over time, however, the *ritsuryō* command economy proved unwieldy and inefficient, a circulating economy quickened, and urban aristocrats and middling officials found ways to create patronage relations with elites in the provinces to better meet their own needs. The court also shifted more of the maintenance and policing of the capital to great aristocratic households. In time those households recruited specialists who once had served the palace exclusively, further weakening codal structures. And by the last half of the tenth century the palace itself became less focal, since it was no longer the monarch's permanent residence and administrative center. That is why today when one seeks "the royal palace" in Kyoto, it is not the original palace of the ninth and early tenth centuries—today's royal palace is an old town palace, and the grand Suzaku Avenue (now Senbon-dōri because it is so narrow) is hard to identify. And as urban aristocrats came to depend more on livelihood from estates in the provinces, they organized patronage networks that stretched down to local managers and cultivators. Throughout, the court aristocracy grew wealthier and more influential, and the capital became more open due to the diverse and diffuse power relations.

So by the eleventh century, residents' lives were much more autonomous from court supervision than they had been in the closed capital of old. By then the denizens of Japan's capital included many members of a middling nobility that administered and provisioned royal government and its top elite—the human comedy of *Shinsarugakuki* is their world. Therein they are described busily participating in their own communities defined by work, livelihood, and neighborhood. For sure, festivals like those of the Kamo, Inariyama, and Matsunoo shrines were generative venues for their collective culture, bringing together officials and non-officials, monks and laymen, and even outsiders from the provinces. These denizens of Heian-kyō felt free to sightsee at royal rituals on the Royal Palace Field; some of their sons became monks of the great official temples and protested court decisions in capital streets; others, officials or not, ignored court dicta as they participated in festivals.

I would not, however, call this galactic Heian-kyō "a privatized city" as does Matthew Stavros in his recent book. By the twelfth century, capital residents, elite or lowly, lived as participants in the blocs and factions that constituted court government.[63] The Heian metropole was still His Majesty's royal center. The monarch and his court ruled with strong backing from the senior retired monarch as head of the royal family and from the regent and premier religious institutions. The metropole with its satellites functioned as the hub of vertical networks that looked to the throne as the apex of Heian society—those networks constructed the realm politically, economically, and culturally.

Notes

1 Monica Smith, *The Social Construction*, 8–9.
2 For Childe's criteria see his "The Urban Revolution," 15.
3 Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* vol. 2, 1228. Specifically Weber saw the "Asian city" as a "princely fortress" administered by officials and lacking commerce, burghers, or any collectivity of urban citizens. In Weber's view these were not true cities. This idea has been influential in the Japanese scholarship: see Terasaki Yasushi, "Kodai toshiron," 2–32. For Gideon Sjoberg's view, see *The Preindustrial City Past and Present*, especially Chapter 8. For Harold Carter's ideas, see *Introduction to Urban Historical Geography*. Like Smith and company, urban historian Niki Hiroshi argues for varied forms and functions of cities through time and space: see his introduction in *Toshi, Zenkindai toshiron no shatei*.
4 Satō Makoto, "Higashi Ajia kodai toshiron no kansei," 1–2.
5 Chye Kiang Heng, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats: The Development of Medieval Chinese Cityscapes*, especially 205.
6 Yamanaka Akira, "Kodai toshi no kōzō to kinō."
7 On the Asuka capital, see Ozawa Tsuyoshi, *Nihon kodai kyūto kōzō no kenkyū*. Ozawa characterizes Asuka as a "palace headquarters" (*kyūto*)—it had density of population but little built environment. In English, Paul Wheatley and Thomas See wrote about Asuka in *From Court to Capital* (1978), but much excavation has taken place since then. Recent discussions include Joan Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*, 66–101; William Wayne Farris, *Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures*, 123–158; and Herman Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan*, 75–85. Kaneko Hiroyuki also describes changes in kingship and the built environment of Fujiwara in his translated essay, "Asuka, Fujiwara, and Heijō."
8 In English on Fujiwara, see William Wayne Farris, *Sacred Texts*, especially 149–158.
9 The historiography on Heijō in Japanese is extensive. For recent research, see Satō Makoto's *Mokkan kara yomitoku Heijō-kyō*; Watanabe Akihiro, *Heijō-kyō no sensanbyakunen zenkensho*; Nara bunkazai kenkyūjo eds. *Heijō-kyō jiten*; and Kitamura Masaki, *Heijō-kyō seiritsu shiron*. A good collection of sources is *Heijō-kyō shiryō shūsei*, vols. 1–2. In English, see William Wayne Farris, *Sacred Texts*, 158–177; Tateno Kazumi, "The Heijō Capital, Form and Function"; William Coaldrake, "City Planning and Palace Architecture in the Creation of the Nara Political Order"; Tsuboi Kiyotari's *The Historical City of Nara* (translated by Gina Barnes); and Piggott, "Tracking the Wa-Kan Dialectic at Nara." On the Nagaoka capital see Farris, *Sacred Texts*, 181–200; and Ellen Van Goethem, *Nagaoka, Japan's Forgotten Capital*, especially 177–211.

10 Furuse Natsuko, *Nihon kodai ōken to gishiki*, esp. 1–32.
11 For a diagram about how this command economy worked, see Joan R. Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*, 200. In contrast with Yamanaka, Sakaehara Towao thinks that the circulating economy (*ryūtsū keizai*) linking Heijō and market places, production points, and entrepots across the Kinai and more distant provincial headquarters (*kokufu*) was already well developed in Nara times. See *Nara jidai ryūtsū keizaishi no kenkyū*, especialy 1–136; and "Kōnō to zaisei," 149–186; Kyōraku Mahoko's "Heijō-kyō kenkyū no genjo to kadai nōto"; and "Heian-kyō ni okeru toshi no tensei." An indispensable discussion of early Kinai transit nodes and ports is Matsubara Hironobu, "Kodai ni okeru tsu no seikaku to kinō." For a map showing commodities sent to Heijō as tax items, see Wheatley and See, *From Court to Capital*, 151.
12 On the move to Heian-kyō, see Yamanaka Akira. *Nihon kodai tojō no kenkyū*; and "Kodai toshi." In English, on reasons for the move, see Ronald Toby, "Why Leave Nara?" On construction of the new palace at Heian, see Joan Piggott, "Palace and Kingship at Early Heian."
13 Kitamura Masaki, "Heian-kyō no shihai kikō, zaike shihai wo chūshin ni," 1–10.
14 Yamanaka Akira, "Kodai toshi," 25–40. An accessible overview is Nitō Atsushi, *Miyako ga tsukuru kodai kokka*.
15 See Hotate Michihisa, "Traffic between Capital and Countryside." Such problems were cited by the provincial governor Miyoshi Kiyoyuki (847–918) in his memorial to the throne of 914, on which see Cornelius Kiley, "Provincial Administration and Land Tenure in Early Heian," 299–305.
16 Tateno Kazumi, *Nihon kodai no kōtsū to shakai*, especially 17–68.
17 Nitō Atsushi, "Shoki Heian-kyō no shiteki igi" and "Kodai tojō no shūtosei." *Kyaku* were compiled in the *Ruijū sandaikyaku* in the early tenth century. Satō Makoto and Yoshida Nobuyuki, *Toshi shakaishi*, 36–41.
18 Hirao Masayuki, "Kizoku no utsuwa, shōmin no utsuwa," 281–284; and Araki Toshio, "Miyako to hina no hito no ōrai," especially 429–433.
19 Smiths and bronze casters were active in the capital. They originally resided in court-provided compounds and later lived together in their own neighborhoods by the late tenth century. See Kume Maiko, "Michimichi no saiku" and "Heian-kyō to shimin no sonzai keitai."
20 Joan Piggott, "What Did a Regent Do?," 26; Takahashi Masaaki, *Kyōto sennen no miyako no rekishi*, 45–49. Ueda Masaaki and Inoue Mitsuo (*Heian-kyō no fūkei*, 80–83) think that only third-rankers would have lived in *shinden*, of which there were maybe twenty at any given time. Also see William Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan*, 81–93; and Oboroya Hisashi, *Heian kizoku to teitaku*.
21 For instance, recent excavations at the residence of the early minister Fujiwara Yoshimi (813–867) uncovered twenty fragments of inscribed pottery (*bokushodoki*) that are the earliest known examples of the *hiragana* syllabary. And on commoner dwellings, see Shigeta Shin'ichi, "Zōshiki no to: Heian-kyō no shomin seikatsu wo bunken shiryō ni miru kokoromi," 41–50. News of archaeological finds can be found in the monthly journal *Bunkazai hakkutsu shutsudo jōhō* as well as on the web in *Kōko arakaruto*, at Kyoto-arc.or.jp.
22 Hotate's ideas about "urban kingship" (*toshi ōken*)—which he sees as a fundamental structure in Japan's history—are strongly influenced by Max Weber. Hotate describes "urban kingship" as the blending of patriarchal and patrimonial authority in relations between capital and provinces. See "Toshi ōken to kizoku hanchū."
23 Takahashi Masaaki, *Kyōto sennen*, 52; and Ojima Shūhei, "Heian kizoku no hō kitei, michimori ishiki no shosō: toshi iji kanri wo chūshin toshite," 6–8. For recent archaeological finds see *Bunkazai hakkutsu shutsudo jōhō*, 52–54; and *Kōkogaku arakaruto*, at Kyoto-arc.or.jp, #57.
24 Yamanaka Akira and Kitamura Masaki. "Kodai kara chūsei e," 25; Yasuda Masahiko, *Heian-kyō no nioi*, 15–30; and Kurosaki Tadashi, "Nihon kodai no toshi to benjo."
25 Kushiki Yoshinori, *Nihon kodai no shūto to kōkyōsei*, 3–14. Another facet of the court's urban policy was the official Seiyakuin hospice for the sick and orphans, concerning which a cluster of wooden documents was uncovered in 2014. See *Bunkazai hakkutsu shutsudo jōhō* 2014.9, 43–44.
26 Kushiki Yoshinori, *Nihon kodai no shūto to kōkyōsei*, 43–91. On the *Kebiishi-chō*, see Inoue Masami, "Kyūseiki danjōdai no kyōnai junsatsu taisei"; Maeda Sadahiko, "Heian jidai no hō to chitsujō: Kebiishichō no yakuwari to igi"; Morita Tei, "Heian chūki kebiishi ni tsuite no oboegaki"; Uwayokote Masataka, "Heian chūki no keisatsu jōtai"; Inoue Mitsuo, *Heian jidai no gunji seido no kenkyū*, 104–131; Ōae Akira, *Ritsuryō seika no shihō to keisatsu: kebiishi seido o chūshin to shite*; and Niunoya Tetsuichi, *Kebiishi: chūsei no kegare to kenryoku*. In English, see Karl Friday, *Hired Swords: The Rise of Private Warrior Power in Early Japan*, 128–136. In French, see Francine Hérail, *Fonctions et fonctionnaires: Japon au début du XIe siècle*, 480–497.

27 Ichikawa Rie, "Nihon kodai ni okeru toshimin no seiritsu: bōrei, hō no tone wo chūshin ni." Also see Oboroya Hisashi, "Heian-kyō rekishi sanpō," and "Toshi to minshu"; Takahashi Masaaki, *Kyoto sennen*; Wakita Haruko, *Chūsei Kyōto to Gion matsuri*; Kaneko Hiroshi, *Heijō no seishin seikatsu*; and Takahashi Yasuo, *Zenkindai no toshi*. In English, see Neil McMullin, "On Placating the Gods and Pacifying the Populace: The Case of the Gion Gōryō Cult"; Kuroda Toshio, "The World of Spirit Pacification"; and Tateno Kazumi, "The Heijō Capital." In French, see Wakita Haruko, "Fêtes et Communautés Urbaines dans le Japon Médiéval, La fête de Gion à Kyoto."

28 On *harae* see Tateno, "The Heijō Capital," 24–26; and Takahashi Yasuo, *Zenkindai toshi*, 5–7. The court annals *Shoku Nihon kōki*, *Montoku jitsuroku*, and *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* record *harae* performances inside the palace into the early ninth century. A *harae* prayer (*norito*) is translated in Theodore de Bary ed. *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 34–36.

29 Toda Yoshimi, *Shoki chūsei shakaishi no kenkyū*, In English, see Toda's "Kyoto and the Estate System," 245–279.

30 Ōyama Kyōhei, "Chūsei no Nihon to Higashi Ajia," especially 1–3.

31 For a discussion of the court-centered polity in English, see Sasaki Muneo, "The Court-centered Polity." Also see Bruce Batten, "Provincial Administration in Early Japan: From *Ritsuryō Kokka* to *Ōchō Kokka*."

32 Wakita Osamu and Wakita Haruko, *Monogatari Kyōto no rekishi*, 54; Wakita Haruko, *Nihon chūsei toshiron*, 72–76.

33 Ōyama Kyōhei, "Chūsei no Nihon to Higashi Ajia," 3–5. He specifically mentions Kitsunesaka, Iwakura, and Matsugasaki to the north; Fukakusa and Inariyama to the south; the Tōji neighborhood in the southern Left Capital; Yodo and Yamasaki on the Yodo River; and Nasubi and Akagari in Yamashiro.

34 Kitamura Masaki, *Heian-kyō, sono rekishi to kōzō*, 187–189; Kushiki Yasunori, "Heian-kyō no takuchi."

35 Hashimoto Yoshihiko, "Satodairi enkaku kō." The Horikawa mansion, built and owned by regents, became the first *satodairi* when the monarch Enyū (r. 969–984) resided there beginning in 976. On the layout of the Ichijōin, a *satodairi*, see Furuse Natsuko, "Tennō to toshi kūkan," especially 108–109.

36 Shigeta Shin'ichi, *Shomintachi no Heian-kyō*, 9–23.

37 There are two English translations of Yoshishige's *Chiteiki*: Peter Wetzler, "Notes from an Arbor by the Pond"; and Burton Watson, "Record of a Pond Pavilion."

38 On monastic protests and the concept of *ōhō buppō*, also see Mikael Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, especially 21–74, 272–273. For discussion of the Yōrō-era *Sōniryō*, see Joan R. Piggott, "Tōdaiji and the Nara Imperium," especially 267–273; and *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*, 215–226.

39 Takahashi Masaaki, *Kyōto sennen*, 64–70.

40 The best compendium of materials and sources for Kūya's life is Ishii Yoshinaga, *Kūya Shōnin no kenkyū*. See also Ishii, *Amida hijiri Kūya*; and Obara Hitoshi, *Yoshishige no Yasutane*. In English see Cliff Clarkson, "Eulogizing Kūya as More than a Nenbutsu Practitioner," 305–327.

41 Sekiguchi Tsutomu, "Inarisai to chiten shōnin"; Inari Jinja Shamusho, *Inari Jinja shiryō*, Vol. 5; and Kume Maiko, "Matsunoo no matsuri no nishi shichijō no kyōdōsei," 95–96. For sources see *Shiryō Kyōto no rekishi*, Vol. 5. Concerning these festivals, see Abe Takeshi et al., *Gishiki nenjū gyōji jiten*, 100. In English see Karen Smyers, "Inari Pilgrimage: Following One's Path on the Mountain."

42 Kume Maiko, "Matsunoo no matsuri."

43 Kitamura Masaki, *Heian-kyō: sono rekishi*, 118–133. Takahashi Masaaki, *Kyōto sennen*, 99–103 and Nishiyama Ryōhei, *Toshi Heian-kyō*, 317.

44 Fukuzawa Tōru, "Toshi e no manazashi" and "Shinsarugakuki byūken: toshi e no manazashi 3," 36–54. Also see Ivo Smits, "Reading the New Ballads." I have discussed both *Shinsarugakuki* and Yoshishige Yasutani's *Chiteiki*, in "Mō hitotsu no Heian-kyō."

45 For a partial English translation of *Shinsarugakuki*, see my "Selections from the *Shinsarugakuki*."

46 On the emergence of the name "Kyōto" in the later eleventh century, Ueda Masaaki and Inoue Mitsuo, *Heian-kyō no fūkei*. This well-illustrated volume also contains a useful chronology. On field-dancing as described in Munetada's journal, see Jacob Raz, "Popular Entertainment and Politics, the Great *Dengaku* of 1096," 297.

47 There are various theories on the transition from the classical to the medieval city. See Takahashi Shin'ichirō, "Chūsei toshiron"; Horiuchi Akihiro, *Miyako wo horu*, especially 101–134, and *Nihon kodai toshishi kenkyū*; Yamanaka Akira and Kitamura Masaki, "Kodai kara chūsei e"; Yamada Kunikazu, *Kyōto toshishi no kenkyū*, especially 311–475; Takahashi Masaaki, *Kyoto sennen*, 71–106; Tanahashi Mitsuo, "Tojō kara toshi e"; and Mikawa Kei, "Chūsei seiritsuki no Kyōto, kenmon toshi no seiritsu." In English see Matthew Stavros, *Kyoto: An Urban History of Japan's Premodern Capital*, especially Chapter 3.

48 On Uji in English, see Mimi Yiengpruksawan, "The Phoenix Hall at Uji and the Symmetries of Replication."
49 Yamada Kunikazu, *Kyōto toshishi* and *Nihon chūsei no shūto to ōken toshi*. Matthew Stavros, *Kyoto*, especially 61–74. On the various town palaces and retirement palaces built during the twelfth century, see Takahashi Masaaki, *Inseiki dairi, daidairi to in no gosho*.
50 Janet Goodwin has discussed Go-Shirakawa's intent to replicate aspects of eighth-century Nara monarchy in "The Buddhist Monarch."
51 Mikawa Kei, "Chūsei seiritsuki no Kyōto," 42. Mikawa notes that the *Engyōbon Heike monogatari* records 40–50,000 houses in the area.
52 *Honchō seiki*, 1142 6/18. Hashimoto Yoshihiko, "Satodairi enkaku kō, 196."
53 Toda Yoshimi, *Shoki chūsei shakaishi no kenkyū*, 213–214. On Munetada and his journal as a historial source, see Christina Laffin, Joan Piggott, and Yoshida Sanae, *Birth and Death in the Royal House*.
54 Takahashi Masaaki, *Kyōto sennen*, 93–94.
55 Sachiko Kawai, "Power of the Purse: Estates and the Religio-political Influence of Japanese Royal Women, 1100–1300." See also Mikawa Kei, "Chūsei seiritsuki no Kyōto," 45.
56 Toda Yoshimi, "Kyoto and the Estate System."
57 See Yamaguchi Hiroshi, "Heian-kyō zōei to jisha"; Hori Yutaka, "Heian-kyō to teradera"; and Kyōraku Mahoko, *Heian-kyō toshi shakaishi no kenkyū*, 198.
58 On Kyoto in Kiyomori's time, see John Whitney Hall, "Kyoto as Historical Background."
59 Nishiyama Ryōhei, *Toshi Heian-kyō*. Also see Kuroda Kichirō, *Chūsei toshi Kyōto no kenkyū*.
60 Takahashi Shin'ichirō, "Chūsei toshiron," especially 272–274.
61 Takahashi Masaaki, *Kyoto sennen*, 105; Matthew Stavros, *Kyoto*, 57.
62 Nishiyama Ryōhei, *Toshi Heian-kyō*; and more recently, *Heian-kyō no sumai*.
63 On this view see Matthew Stavros, *Kyoto*, 37; 43–74.

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15
Religion in Nara and Heian Japan

Mikaël Bauer

When Empress Genmei (661–721) announced the establishment of the new capital, *Heijō-kyō*, in 708, Fujiwara no Fuhito (659–720) created a new city that formed one whole with several Buddhist temples. During the eighth century, Tōdaiji and Kōfukuji, representing the Kegon and Hossō schools respectively, became increasingly significant in both religious and institutional terms. It is unclear just how well developed these monastic complexes were at their foundation in the Nara period (710–794) but over the course of the following Heian period (794–1185) these Nara temples gradually developed into powerful "gates of power" (*kenmon*) consisting of elaborate internal lineages and sub-temples, or *monzeki*. When the capital moved to *Heian-kyō* (Kyoto) in 794, the temples continued to flourish, and became known as the Southern Temples, in contrast with the new capital's Northern Temples—among which Tendai's Enryakuji was undoubtedly the most important. Both the Northern and the Southern establishment developed their own elaborate ritual and institutional framework, but there was much more to classical and early medieval Japan's religiosity than these large Buddhist institutions.

Located in a religious landscape centered on yin-yang divination, female shamans, monks and nuns, and worship of local divinities, these temple complexes were only one part of premodern Japan's dynamic horizon of meaning. While Buddhism and its rituals became the main basis for formulating sovereignty during the Heian period and dominated the court, the Nara state was "a regime whose ruling ideology was still predominantly Confucian."[1] Throughout the Heian period, however, Confucianism gradually lost its centrality, to be replaced by esoteric Buddhism as the state's main conceptual framework.

Alongside an institutional organization characterized by the *ritsuryō* legal codes (formulated in Confucian terms) and the sovereignty of the *tennō* (literally "heavenly sovereign" but most commonly rendered into English as "emperor"), the Nara capital and its temples developed within an eclectic religious universe in which geomantic principles, native divinities, rituals, and debates all had their place. In the words of Ivan Morris's early scholarship, we could label Nara and Heian period religiosity as a form of eclecticism in which "various religions and superstitions [had] become … inextricably entwined."[2]

Contrary to the general assumption that only men dominated religion institutionally and doctrinally, women also participated prominently in religious activities. As demonstrated by Brian Ruppert, women were not just patrons of rituals but actively joined in various forms of

relic veneration during the Heian era.[3] Thus, from literary production to ritual performance and patronage, both in and outside court, women played significant roles in Nara and Heian Japan's religious sphere. As exemplified by research on female shamans, or *miko*, an examination of women's religious roles has the potential of improving our understanding of the relation between the center and the periphery, or the overlap between Buddhism and folk religion.[4] An overview of these periods therefore requires great subtlety in treating religious differentiation and gender roles. As Barbara Ruch notes, in commenting on the little progress in our understanding of the history of Buddhist women, "'Women and Buddhism' is a theme as old as the sacred texts of Buddhism itself."[5]

Japanese and Western scholarship dealing with Nara and Heian period religious developments has undergone tremendous changes over the past decade. While new areas of interest have been introduced, such as an increased interest in gender studies or ritual, the biggest change has probably been the interdisciplinary character of recent research by both established and younger scholars. As always, however, new developments come with advantages and disadvantages.

On the one hand, the interdisciplinary approach has prompted the study of religious developments within their social and historical contexts, clarifying why certain developments took place at a given time. Especially in case of gender studies, much effort has been made to fill the lacuna in Buddhist Studies mentioned by Ruch.

Nevertheless, while this approach initially improved our comprehension of larger developments, one could argue that in-depth studies of texts and commentaries have been pushed to the background. Although Japanese researchers such as Nagamura Makoto have made tremendous progress regarding the reading and analysis of hitherto unknown or overlooked temple archives, Western scholars initially did not pay enough attention to these Japanese developments.[6] It is, however, encouraging to see that recent Western scholarship on ritual debates, female patronage, or Buddhist manuscripts combines interdisciplinary aspects with textual analysis, an evolution supported by an increase in Japanese publicly available digitized archives.

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of some of the major themes addressed by scholars specializing in Nara and Heian period religiosity. In general terms, this means that I will discuss the study of religious developments following the Asuka period (*c*.538–710) that were part of what historians have called the *ritsuryō* state, rule by regents (*sekkan seiji*) and rule by retired emperors (*insei seiji*).[7] In terms of historical divisions, these categories belong to the period from the classical (*kōdai*) to the early medieval (*chūsei*) era. Given the interdisciplinary character of premodern Japanese studies in general, I will include works from both History and Religious Studies and address the rigid divisions imposed on its traditions, discuss the relation between religion and state, and address scholarship on gender.

Premodern Japan's religious traditions

The Japanese premodern landscape was an inherently diverse, dynamic whole consisting of several traditions that influenced one another continuously. The official introduction of Buddhism in 538 is correctly seen as a watershed moment in Japan's early religious history, but one should not lose sight of the plurality of continental influences that encountered several forms of religiosity already present on the Japanese islands. One of the main problems running throughout scholarship dealing with Nara-Heian period religiosity and history is one of categorization and the application of modern concepts to a premodern context. On the one hand, scholars came to address "Buddhist," "Shintō," "Confucian," and "Daoist" topics; while on the other hand, the viability of certain of these categories has rightly been questioned. In addition, we have to be careful not to apply modern (post-Meiji) conceptualizations of independent traditions and schools

to the premodern monks, patrons, or practitioners who engaged with a plurality of teachings. As shown by the case of *Onmyōdō*, or Yin-Yang divination, even the application of the term "religion" or the Japanese designation "*shūkyō*" itself is at times contested.

Buddhism arrived at the Yamato court in the sixth century through the Korean kingdom of Paekche, placing Japan at the crossroads of East Asian cultural, political, and religious spheres of interest. One of Japan's earliest historical narratives, the *Nihon shoki*, relates that the court received sacred texts or sūtras, and a statue of the Buddha. This official history mentions that factionalism ensued between the Mononobe and Nakatomi families on the one hand and the Soga on the other. The former are said to have rejected these new teachings, while the latter were willing to accept the new religion. The "official" reason still mentioned in most textbooks on premodern Japan is that the Mononobe and the Nakatomi favored Japan's "indigenous" *kami* (gods or divinities). Such an explanation, however, disregards factionalism at court and the larger political context in which the *Nihon shoki*, as an official and imperially sanctioned history, was composed. Some scholars, such as Donald McCallum, have stressed the importance of including other sources—the *engi* or temples' "Origin Chronicles," including the *Gangoji engi* and the *Daianji engi*, for example—to reassess the historical accounts mentioned in the *Nihon shoki*.[8] While Edward Kidder and others have disagreed with some of McCallum's conclusions, it is certain that from the outset Buddhism was thrown into a highly politicized context characterized by factional strife, exemplifying the fact that from its arrival in Japan, Buddhism and governance were not separate entities. Within a few decades, Buddhism firmly established itself, one of its main supporters being Empress Suiko's regent, Shōtoku Taishi (574?–622?), one of premodern Japan's most enigmatic personalities.

It is difficult to overestimate the prestige accorded to Prince Shōtoku throughout Japanese history. Traditionally he is regarded as a patron saint of Japanese Buddhism, responsible for not only defeating Buddhism's opponents, the Mononobe, but also authoring Buddhist commentaries, constructing temples, and drafting Japan's so-called Seventeen-Article Constitution in 604. In recent years, however, several studies have argued for a reevaluation of Prince Shōtoku and scholars have attempted to distinguish the "historical" Prince Umayado (Umayado no Ōji) from his mythical persona, analyzing the rise of the Shōtoku cult and its persistence throughout the premodern period. According to Michael Como, certain kinship groups of Silla origin were in fact responsible for the construction of a "Shōtoku cult," drawing attention away from the Soga and thus creating a focus on the "royal" Prince Umayodo.[9] Kevin Carr continued along this route and further discussed the changing identities of Shōtoku throughout the medieval period through visual hagiographies and imagination.[10] While progress has been made regarding the construction of the mythical Shōtoku, it is clear that this insight has yet to be included in introductions to premodern Japanese history and religion.

From its arrival in Yamato, Buddhism played a significant role in the formulation of sovereignty within the larger context of state formation. Whether it was the construction of Tōdaiji and its *daibutsu* ("Great Buddha") in the seventh century, the creation of Fujiwara no Michinaga's (966–1027) temple, Hōjōji, in the eleventh, or the construction of Retired Emperor Shirakawa's (1053–1129) grand Hosshōji in 1075, Buddhism was always central in the creation of authority.[11] Buddhism was not, however, the only tradition to do so, and several scholars from the fields of Archaeology, History, and Religion have attempted to unravel the eclectic worldview that surrounded the creation of an imperial line before and during the eighth century.

While the Nara period is often portrayed as a stable period in which the first "permanent" capital was constructed, we have to realize that this century was characterized by intense political strife between imperial lineages and conflicts within the emerging Fujiwara family. The creation of Tōdaiji's Construction Agency, the early Kōfukuji community, and the sponsorship and

writing of Buddhist texts all took place in the midst of these political and institutional developments. It is in connection with the development and legitimizing of a ruling line that we start our discussion of perhaps the least understood traditions, "Daoism" and *onmyōdō*.

Daoism, the absent tradition?

In his study, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan*, Herman Ooms addressed the formulation of new symbolic legitimation by Emperor Tenmu (?–686) and his descendants. The seventh century saw intense factional strife at court between the so-called Tenji and Tenmu lines, and Ooms provides an in-depth study of the construction of imperial legitimacy during this period. Central to his argument is the alleged assimilation of *Daoist* "mythemes" in the construction of a new form of royal power, as exemplified by Tenmu's usage of the title *tennō*, most commonly rendered in English as "emperor."[12]

Ooms is not the only one to discover traces of "Daoism" in the early formulation of Japanese kinship. In her work on the fourth-century formation of political power in Japan, Gina Barnes argues that the early Kofun or burial mound system was based on the "Chinese Daoist mythology of the Queen Mother of the West."[13] Barnes adds that Himiko, the elusive female ruler who allegedly ruled over Yamatai, might have functioned as an earthly counterpart of this Daoist deity. Similarly, Edward Kidder states that Himiko's rule was supported by "Daoist divination," and mentions that Chinese records describe her as making use of *guei-dao*, a form of Daoist popular practice.[14]

Nevertheless, the interpretation of Himiko's engagement in "Daoist" practice ultimately relies on what one understands the term "Daoism" to mean, in the cultural and religious framework of early Japan. Scholars have dealt with this question in several ways, with some accepting a Daoist presence in Nara-Heian Japan, and others categorically rejecting the idea. The problem might be that there is no consensus regarding what would be understood as "premodern Japanese Daoism" in the first place, rendering a discussion on whether or not it existed difficult to solve. The most obvious route to follow might be to distinguish between an institutionalized Daoism on the one hand and the presence of general Chinese practices and imagery on the other.

The theme of the Queen Mother of the West, raised by Barnes and Kidder, was also incorporated into Michael Como's *Weaving and Binding*, in which he describes the vast influence of immigrant groups on the development of rituals and the religious landscape before and during the Nara period. While rejecting any form of institutionalized Daoism during this period, Como put forward the hypothesis that the cult of the Queen Mother of the West had become so widespread that it was perceived as "native."[15] This conclusion is, however, not accepted by several scholars, who argue that one cannot prove that the Queen Mother of the West was indeed part of Japanese religiosity, a disagreement situated between archaeological and textual interpretation.[16]

This discussion transcends the Queen Mother and extends to the very application of the word "Daoism" in a premodern Japanese context. The main point does not concern the absorption of Chinese ritual elements per se, but revolves around the category "Daoism." As Livia Kohn puts it, "the question of the presence and role of Taoism in Japan is thus first of all a question of definition, then a question of degree."[17] Scholars have struggled to define the term "Daoism," yet blithely applied it when addressing the Japanese context. In her work on Daoist studies in the West, Anna Seidel mentions that what scholars of Japanese religion often label "Daoism" are in fact practices and rituals part of a "pan-Chinese branch of learning with its own chain of transmission distinct from Daoism."[18] Nevertheless, Seidel saw a "pervasive influence of the Daoist religion on Japanese culture," a statement with which Kohn disagreed.[19] Once again it seems we are dealing with a problem of definition.

James Robson takes a nuanced stance, distinguishing Daoist ideas and practices on the one hand from organized religious institutions on the other, clarifying that only the former was present in Nara Japan. Robson includes an interesting mid-eighth-century episode involving the Tang monk Ganjin (688–763), in which the Japanese court supposedly refused the Chinese Emperor Xuanzong's request for permission to send a Daoist master to Japan.[20]

Regardless of what one considers to be "Daoist" in a Japanese context, it is clear that certain ideas later labeled as Daoist—but not its institutions—made their way to Japan before and during the Nara period. An understudied route to follow might be the in-depth exploration of the influx of Daoist terminology and ideas as absorbed by Buddhist sources and commentaries, or the close link between the import of Daoist elements and Korean influence on Japanese culture. These important areas of study were already noted by Seidel in 1990: "What northern Japan assimilated (between the fourth and the seventh century) was not freeze-dried Chinese culture … but rather Korean culture including its adopted Chinese elements."[21] In other words, scholars should first address the presence or absence of "Daoist elements" in a Korean context to better understand the meaning and use of these concepts in an early Japanese environment. The prime example of the Japanese reception of Chinese practices might be the understudied *onmyōdō* tradition.

Recently, studies of the Chinese influence on Nara period rites have given rise to an increasing interest in the definition and status of *onmyōdō* throughout the premodern and early modern periods. A form of divination derived from Yin-Yang theories, *onmyōdō* is a set of practices and beliefs that entered Japan through Korea around the seventh and eighth centuries. As Bernard Faure notes, part of the difficulty in addressing this tradition is the term *onmyōdō* itself, as it encompasses a "variety of phenomena that … probably have a mere 'family resemblance'."[22]

According to Hayashi Makamoto and Matthias Hayek, the *onmyōdō* tradition was initially regarded as a Japanese version of Daoism, but scholars have come to realize that it was in fact a distinct tradition constructed in Japan. They do, however, admit that "it is difficult to state that it has nothing to do with Daoism."[23]

In discussing *onmyōdō* as a tradition that was formed in Japan, Masuo Shin'ichirō analyzed its connection with Chinese religions and the status of the *onmyōryō* office within the *ritsuryō* state's institutional framework. He concluded that this *onmyōryō* initially was a government office in charge of divination, started to become involved in rituals during the Nara period, and evolved toward involvement in prayers and "spell-like rituals" by the early Heian period.[24] His discussion of seventh-century Buddhist monks who held high positions in the Ministry of Monastic Affairs but who were also involved in the transmission of *dunjia* divination, geomancy, and *fangshu* texts is particularly interesting. This example not only demonstrates the eclectic nature of the Buddhist monastic community and its ritual background, it also confirms the point made above, that the main question should perhaps not be whether or not "Daoism" was present in premodern Japan, but how Daoist terminology and practices related to the larger whole of continental ideas that were received by the Japanese.[25]

A closer examination of the links between the *onmyōryō* office and the Buddhist community reveals a profound interest among esoteric monks in cultivating calendrical skills, with numerous monks enjoying high reputations in horoscopy.[26] The exploration of the close connection between esoteric monks and *onmyōdō*, and especially the former's participation in the state's time-keeping, would greatly refine our understanding of the Buddhist community's participation in court matters, both from a religious and institutional point of view. For example: Buddhist monks and *onmyōji* (yin-yang masters) joined in assemblies that involved the chanting of sacred *dhāranī* (esoteric incantations) or talismans (*hitokata*) to ward off pollution or diseases.[27] Despite these events being mentioned in diaries or depicted on scrolls, little research has been done to unravel their religious and ritual significance.

Daoism or Shintō?

Connected to the questions concerning the application of the term Daoism, is the relationship between Daoism and "Shintō," or *kami* worship, a discussion that harks back to the work of the famed historian Kuroda Toshio. In 1981, Kuroda authored the article "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," in which he argued that Shintō was "another term for Taoism," as exemplified by the veneration of swords and mirrors or the application of titles such as *mahito* or *shinjin*.[28] He formulated this theory in the context of his view that Shintō did not exist as an independent religion in premodern Japan but rather was one part of a more general religious framework that evolved into *kenmitsu* (exoteric-esoteric) Buddhism during the Heian period.

In their comments on Kuroda's article, and more specifically on the significance of the word Shintō as it occurs in the *Nihon shoki*, James Dobbins and Suzanne Gay stated that it is indeed possible that the early Japanese regarded their rituals and beliefs as Daoist, even though these rituals might have been different from their counterparts in Tang China. As did Robson, they acknowledge that there was no "systematic form of Daoism" in archaic Japan, although they also suggest the possibility that Daoism gradually entered the Japanese religious landscape in the course of the classical and medieval periods.[29]

In arguing that the connection between Chinese religion and Shintō has not yet received sufficient scholarly attention, Timothy Barrett takes issue with Kuroda and Seidel's conclusions that Daoism's influence on early Japan was pervasive, and sides with Livia Kohn in doubting "its appropriateness" when speaking of Japan. Barrett does include the very relevant suggestion that the connection between the Japanese formulation of sovereignty and continental "state Taoism" should be further investigated, showing the profound relevance of the questions regarding the symbolic representation of sovereignty presented by Gina Barnes and Herman Ooms.[30] It seems that a viable route to take in investigating the connection between "Daoist elements," *kami* worship, and sovereignty in the early Heian period, is to consider the first through the introduction of *mikkyō*, esoteric Buddhism, and the role of these traces of Daoism within the interaction between esoteric Buddhism and *kami* worship. A very fruitful example of this interaction would be the topic of medicine and healing rituals at the imperial court.

The alleged connection between continental Daoist elements and "Shintō" does, however, also raise the question of the latter's identity. On the one hand one can certainly argue that "Daoism" does not apply to Nara or earlier periods in Japan, but what about "Shintō" itself? Following the publication of Kuroda's article, scholars have come to reject Shintō's "official history" by problematizing the application of the term to the premodern period. Instead, designations such as "*kami* worship" are widely used and it is argued that what is called "Shintō" today is significantly different from its pre-Meiji (1868) counterpart. Nevertheless, as Breen and Teeuwen argue, while today's "Shintō" is a post-Meiji product, *kami*, shrines, their myths, and many rituals are "a great deal older than their conceptualization as components of Shinto."[31]

Rather than focusing on the connection between the abstractions Buddhism and Shintō, recent research primarily explores the connection between particular temples and shrines, cultic sites or local forms of praxis involving *kami*, and Buddhist concepts. Here, scholars follow Kuroda's assertion that the rigid categorizations "Buddhism and Shintō" do not correspond to premodern Japanese religiosity.

One of the earliest to examine the relation between a "Shintō" shrine and a Buddhist temple during the Nara and the Heian periods was Allan Grapard, in 1992, with his groundbreaking *The Protocol of the Gods*. Inspired by Kuroda's earlier insights, Grapard approached the Kōfukuji-Kasuga temple complex as a "combinativist" example.[32] Thus, rather than placing the combination "temple-shrine" in a comparative framework, he described it from the perspectives of locale

and the combination of practices and their socio-economic functions. As Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli have noted, what sets Grapard apart from Ivan Morris' earlier references to the combination of "Shintō" and Buddhism is that Grapard addresses *kami* worship as integrated into a larger system, while Morris treated the two traditions as distinct religions that form one another's "antitheses."[33] Pursuant to the section above regarding the usage of the term "Daoism," Grapard also adds that the same combinativist approach ought to be used to address the coexistence of Shintō, Buddhism, Daoism, and the Confucian tradition.[34] Within the interaction between Buddhism, Onmyōdō, and Kami worship, a "symbolic creativity was at its best" and further analysis of the ritual, institutional, and textual overlap between these categories is indeed far overdue.[35]

Starting from a discussion on Grapard and Kuroda's findings, Teeuwen and Rambelli noted in 2003 that the study of "Buddhist forms of *kami* worship … has as yet hardly been embarked upon," a situation that does not seem to have changed significantly in the past decade.[36] Their edited volume *Buddhas and Kami in Japan* discusses *honji suijaku* or the "original forms of deities and their local traces" as a means to comprehend premodern Japan's "Buddhist" *kami* cults and concludes that *kami* were not just simply identified with a certain buddha or bodhisattva. Instead we find that certain deities or localities were "defined as local, temporary particularizations of larger, universal entities."[37]

In connection with the application of *honji suijaku* to sites of worship and demonstrating how "native deities also dwell in the dharma," Anna Andreeva analyzed the origin chronicle "The Karmic Origins of the Great Bright Miwa Deity" (*Miwa daimyōjin engi*). This medieval text provided a new significance to Mount Miwa, a site connected with *kami* worship from as early as the Kofun period and commonly connected with *ryōbu shintō*, a tradition that regards *kami* as manifestations of the Buddhist Womb and Diamond Mandala. In the context of correctly understanding premodern Japan's religiosity, Andreeva points out that the referential framework of this text is vast and incorporates Hindu, Chinese, and Japanese elements in conversation with Buddhist esoteric theories.[38] In addition, the text connects the cultic site Miwa with other sites of worship such as Ise, Hiei, Tōnomine, and Yoshino, thus constructing a vast "sacred geography."

Nara and Heian Buddhism

While many traditions colored the premodern religious landscape, the Buddhist tradition occupied a central position from its official acceptance in the sixth century. Scholarship on Buddhist developments during the classical and the medieval periods is extensive, and a concise overview of recent themes is destined to be incomplete.

Buddhist ritual, its institutional implications, and a reassessment of the role of women in Nara and Heian Buddhism, seem to be the main recent points of interest; and in essence themes such as female patronage, ritual developments, and monks' institutional progress are all intrinsically connected. Most important to keep in mind, but unfortunately not sufficiently addressed in scholarship, is that the Buddhism of the center was in fact very eclectic. This is exemplified by monks' involvement with the *onmyōryō* office mentioned above, the overlapping roles of nuns and *miko* during the Nara period, or the Buddhist community's reliance on female shamans for various services.[39]

When Fujiwara no Fuhito built the new Nara capital as one whole with the Buddhist temples, there were six "schools" (*nantō rokushū*) present in Japan: Kusha, Kegon, Hossō, Jōjitsu, Ritsu, and Sanron. After Saichō and Kūkai's return from Tang China in 805 and 806 respectively, the Shingon and Tendai schools slowly developed, resulting in the "eight schools." One should,

however, realize that Nara's main rituals, such as the Yuima-e or the Saishōō, in fact rose significantly in importance only after the Nara period, formed "the nucleus of the early Heian establishment," and continued to change in both format and institutional significance throughout the Heian period.[40] While Fuhito is often mentioned in connection with the construction of the Nara capital and its temples, we should not lose sight of his wife Tachibana no Michiyo (?–733) and their daughter Imperial Consort Kōmyō (701–760), who both played pivotal roles in the expansion of early Kōfukuji and the construction of several other temples.[41]

When the capital was moved to *Heian-kyō* in 794, the rituals of the original Nara temples or the "Southern Schools" continued to gain power, but in the latter half of the Heian period they were confronted with the rise of new temples, the "Northern Schools." In addition, grand temples, such as Retired Emperor Shirakawa's Hosshōji, and their newly established rituals created an alternative route for monks to proceed to the elusive Ministry of Monastic affairs, or *sōgō*.

This institution, aimed at overseeing the Buddhist community, was founded in 624, and illustrates best the entanglement of Buddhism and State throughout the Nara and Heian period.[42] Alongside monastic developments and political intrigue, this ministry's composition and significance would change tremendously throughout these five centuries.

The main theoretical framework for addressing Buddhist developments during the Heian period has undoubtedly been Kuroda Toshio's "*kenmitsu taisei ron*" ("theory of Exoteric-Esoteric Buddhism"). According to Kuroda, this Buddhist framework was formed during the early Heian period and supported the religious and institutional sphere till the sixteenth century. His work had great implications for our understanding of both Buddhism and *kami* worship throughout the premodern period, but several Japanese and Western scholars have criticized Kuroda's understanding of exoteric-esoteric Buddhism or his emphasis on the Tendai School.

It has to be noted that the usage of the term "school," although widely used in Western scholarship, might be inappropriate to describe the various groups or lineages to which monastics belonged. Monks did not necessarily belong to a single "school" ("*shū*"), and one often finds that the same person appears in several lineages. Ritual records often refer to the same monk as belonging to a different temple or "school," a characteristic that started during the Nara period and continued throughout the premodern era. The emergence of combined lineages or "schools," linked with the development of the *monzeki*, and the presence of the higher nobility in the temple hierarchy certainly needs to be further examined. For example, a closer look at certain "exoteric" Hossō monks at Kōfukuji reveals that they also belonged to Shingon lineages. In addition, Sanron monks at Tōdaiji's Tōnan often belonged to Shingon.[43] The actual influence of these dual institutional identities on ritual and commentarial developments, however, remains unclear.

On the one hand, the application of the term *kenmitsu* (exoteric-esoteric) certainly makes sense on the institutional and ritual level, but on the other hand it remains difficult to distinguish an exoteric-esoteric synthesis within commentaries. The Hossō-Shingon monk Kojima no Shinkō certainly is an example of a thinker who attempted to merge the exoteric and the esoteric but much more research needs to be conducted to fully understand "*kenmitsu*" on a doctrinal level.[44]

The institutional evolution of the *sangha* (Buddhist community) started well before the Nara period with the creation of the Ministry of Monastic Affairs in 624 under Empress Suiko and the establishment of the "Four Great Temples" in the fourth month of 680. These official temples consisted of Asukadera (*c*.600), Kudara Ōdera (639), Kawaradera (*c*.660), and Yakushiji (680).[45] The ranking, number, and members of these exclusive institutions changed over the course of the Nara and Heian periods, most notably by the inclusion of Kōfukuji in 710 and Tōdaiji in 752.[46] In 718 the *Sōniryō*, "Rules for Monks and Nuns" were promulgated, exemplifying the monks' and nuns' "status as belonging to the governmental bureaucracy."[47] While the Ministry of Monastic Affairs represented the monastic hierarchy on a macro level, the creation of the office

of the abbot at the major temples (Tōdaiji in 752 and Kōfukuji in 757), and their internal organization through the temples' three highest officials (*sangō*), represent the institutionalization of the monastic order on a micro level.

The Japanese scholar Ihara Kesao has explained the connection between these "external" and "internal" developments through the *kokusei-kasei* paradigm, a theoretical approach of great benefit for Western scholars wishing to apply, or question, the application of the categories "public and private" in a premodern context.[48] Ihara uses these concepts primarily to refer to the medieval period, but I would argue that his methodology of addressing the temples, their rituals and emerging lineages can equally be applied to the earlier Nara and Heian periods.

To better comprehend the importance of shared lineages and exoteric-esoteric rituals, further analysis of the rise of the aristocratic *monzeki* or "subtemples" within the larger temple complex is of utmost importance. The first to emerge was Kōfukuji's Ichijōin in 980, starting a process that would transform the head temple effectively into a dual organization with Daijōin by the latter half of the Heian period, leading to internal factionalism and competition for high ritual positions. Further analysis of the monks, their dual institutional and doctrinal identities, and their connection with the creation of new rituals could greatly improve our understanding of the state's exoteric-esoteric conceptual basis. Japanese scholarship on the medieval *monzeki*, such as Takayama Kyōko's work on Kōfukuji, has made tremendous progress but their insights have yet to be included in Western scholarship.[49]

The relation between the temples and the abstraction "state" can be analyzed through institutional reform, ritual developments, gender categorizations, and commentarial studies. During the past decade several Japanese academics have produced impressive studies that address the connections among the temples on the one hand, and the major temple complexes versus the organization of the state on the other. Most of these have, however, dealt with Heian period developments and the Nara period is still in need of more attention.

Contrary to the popular view of the Nara period as stable and centralized, the eighth century was characterized by intense political strife of which the temples, monks, nuns, the production of texts, and the creation of rituals were an integral part. From both a conceptual and an institutional point of view, there was no distinction between matters of governance and the religious sphere, as the one would be formulated by referring to the other.[50] The best-known model that addresses the connection between sovereignty and Buddhism is undoubtedly Kuroda's usage of *ōbō buppō* or "The Law of the Sovereign and the Law of the Buddha," a premodern term that refers to Buddhism and governance as "the two wings of a bird" or "the two wheels of a cart."[51] Kuroda argues that this mutually dependent relationship (*ōbō buppō sōi ron*) came to the fore in the eleventh century and that the Eight Heian Schools formed one exoteric-esoteric framework that included *kami* worship and *onmyōdō*.[52] The development of this exoteric-esoteric framework and its creation of particular ritual hierarchy developed alongside the emergence of the landholding system (*shōen*) in connection with the rise of strong temple complexes (*jisha*).

Kuroda's application of *ōbō buppō* and *kenmitsu* Buddhism is thus in fact central in the formulation of his influential theory that attempts to explain the connection between religious and political power in the premodern period, the *kenmon taisei* or "gates of power system." This concept refers to the three powerful groups comprising the court nobles (*kuge*), the warrior aristocracy (*buke*), and the temple-shrine complexes (*jisha*).[53] While Kuroda's theory has been widely applied by both Japanese and Western scholars, his model has not gone unchallenged.

In *The Gates of Power*, Mikael Adolphson argued for an "integrated treatment of religion and politics" to correctly understand the "cooperative rulership" of religious and secular elites. Through a close analysis of divine demonstrations, Adolphson demonstrates how certain "internal" temple matters cannot be disconnected from power struggles at the court.[54]

Adolpson's insights could be further explored by connecting his analysis with Ihara's application of the terms *kokusei* and *kasei* to understand ritual and institutional entanglement from the Heian to the Kamakura period. Defining *kasei* as "that which regulates a particular *kenmon*," Ihara states that the polity of the center and the internal organization of the *kenmon* coexisted in one another.[55] In criticizing Kuroda, Ihara considers the *kenmon* as "non-private" entities that ultimately shared power. In other words, there was no strict opposition between the state and the temples, leading us to rethink the concept "state" in a premodern context.[56]

Similarly, Okano Kōji's discussion on the connection between governance and temple complexes allows us to connect in detail the evolution of the temple's "internal" institutional structure with the abstraction "state."[57] By applying the concepts of shared rule to the major temples' internal institutional and ritual developments, we might be able to better understand the inseparability of ritual, doctrinal, and institutional developments. The ideal medium for investigating the connection between these elements might be the ritual site itself, interpreted as a Geertzian "Theatre of the State," in which both monastic and political powers are represented.

In recent years, studies have been conducted on the historical evolution of these rituals in relation to their institutional and religious significance. Central to these studies are records that list the ritual participants' institutional affiliation and the vast collections of remaining *shōgyō*, doctrinal texts used in preparation of debates (*rongi*). Especially the in-depth analysis of Kusunoki Junshō and Minowa Kenryō has inspired several other Japanese and Western scholars to look at the content of debate rituals such as Kōfukuji's Yuima-e.[58] We can, however, extend this even further—for example to the ritualized usage of texts or the creation of the "canon," a discussion that would enable us to connect Nara and Heian period developments.

While doctrinal texts did indeed occupy a central place in the preparation of rituals, relics, and especially "ritual economy" are pivotal to understand the process in which rituals provided legitimacy and centralized authority. Brian Ruppert has suggested that relics and their function in ritual exemplify a model that predates the *ōbō buppō* paradigm and embodies the concepts of blessing (*on*) and requital (*hōon*).[59] These two principles are part of the four fundamental debts (*shion*), stand for the fundamental relationships within Buddhist society, and thus are central to understanding of the relation between Buddhism and State.

From their arrival in Japan, the usage and production of Buddhist texts was heavily politicized. Sutras were copied after the death of the sovereign or a patron, as exemplified by the copying of the entire canon after Queen Consort Kōmyō's death in 760.[60] When the monk Genbō returned from Tang China in 735, he imported more than five thousand texts, all of which were stored at Kōfukuji, the Fujiwara temple that was still being constructed around the time. As I have argued, however, the text's allocation to Kōfukuji and Genbō's residence at the same temple can be situated within the power struggle between the Tachibana and the Fujiwara and his close relation to Emperor Shōmu and Kōmyō.[61] In other words, the import, production, and storage of Buddhist texts was thoroughly embedded in power struggles at court.

Nevertheless, we should also be careful not to regard the writing of Buddhist texts merely as an expression of political realities. Brian Lowe has argued that the study of the materiality, style, and artistic properties of religious texts can be used to address hermeneutical questions and thus explore the relation between material properties and the classification of knowledge.[62] In this context, much further research is needed to explore the ritual of writing and to situate the Japanese case within a larger, East Asian, framework. This approach would not just be a cross-cultural one; it would also necessitate an approach that focuses on the ritualized process of writing across traditions, genres, and periodization.

Buddhist texts were not always meant to be "read" and their purpose and significance changed according to the type of religious practice of which they were part. Max Moerman and Heather

Blair have both explored the appropriation of certain sutras in the context of pilgrimage. Based on the choice of scriptures chosen for "sutra burials," Moerman concluded that pilgrims engaged in this practice for various reasons that surpassed the concern with salvation of the Dharma. Instead, many engaged in this practice for the sake of saving loved ones or oneself by attaining rebirth in Miroku's Tushita Heaven or Amida's Pure Land.[63] Focusing on the connection between text and place in *Real and Imagined*, Blair discusses how pilgrimage and sutra burial on Mount Kinpusen altered the actual physical landscape. Relying on a theoretical framework inspired by geographers such as Edward Soja and David Harvey the author discusses Kinpusen's pilgrimage at the intersection of real and imagined space and clarifies how the mountain and its landscape was both received and constructed by the pilgrim.[64]

Conclusion

I have attempted to provide a concise overview of some of the major themes of Nara and Heian period religiosity addressed by Western scholars. As we have seen, recent Western scholarship has blurred the (anachronistic) modern divisions between traditions and has focused on the analysis of ritual, devotion, and gender roles. Of course, I was able to present only a cursory overview of the vast field of premodern Japanese religions; many other very valuable areas of interest, such as the importance of imagery in devotional practices, the formation of Shugendō, a form of mountain worship that contains elements from several traditions, or studies on individual priests and patriarchs, have not been addressed.[65] Instead, I have focused on areas that I believe will be prominent in the years to come: the relation between religion and state, ritual, and gender distinctions; and how all these spheres are closely interconnected. I would like to briefly formulate the following two suggestions for future purposes.

First, research on premodern Japanese religion and history should attempt to transcend its geographical area of interest and situate Japanese developments in a larger East Asian context. In particular the Korean influence on early Japanese developments needs to be further investigated. Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara's *Pilgrims, Patrons and Place* offers a good example of how religious practices can be addressed in a wider comparative manner.[66]

Second, in order to clarify the overlap between the ritual and textual sphere and demonstrate the eclectic character of early commentaries and their ritual application, scholars might want to include studies of early Chinese ritual and textual developments. Scholars such as Michael Gentz or Martin Kern have conducted in-depth research on the inseparability of the textual and ritual sphere in early China and it seems that the discussion surrounding the categories "Daoism" and *onmyōdō* or the presence of general Chinese ritual practices and terminology in early Japanese Buddhist histories and commentaries could benefit significantly from their methodology and insights.[67] Situating Japan in its larger, East Asian context will undoubtedly help us to understand how ideas from the mainland were received, transformed, and ultimately gave rise to new systems of thought and religious praxis in later eras.

Notes

1 Abe Ryūichi, *The Weaving of Mantra*, 179–180.
2 Ivan Morris, *The World of the Shining Prince: Court Life in Ancient Japan*, 106; Fabio Rambelli and Mark Teeuwen, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm*, 3.
3 Brian Ruppert, *Jewel in the Ashes, Buddha Relics and Power in Early Medieval Japan*, 192–194.
4 Lori Meeks, "The Disappearing Medium: Reassessing the Place of Miko in the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan," 217.
5 Barbara Ruch, *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, xliii–xliv.

6 Brian Ruppert, "Constructing Histories, Thinking Ritual Gatherings, and Rereading 'Native' Religion: A Review of Recent Books Published in Japanese on Premodern Japanese Religion (Part Two)," 363.
7 The Hakuhō period is not treated separately in this chapter. For a recent, general overview in connection with the early Nara period, see William E. Deal and Brian Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, 45–54.
8 Donald F. McCallum, *The Four Great Temples: Buddhist Archaeology, Architecture, and Icons of Seventh-Century Japan*, 5–7.
9 Michael Como, *Shōtoku: Ethnicity, Ritual, and Violence in the Japanese Buddhist Tradition*, 3–5.
10 Kevin Gray Carr, *Plotting the Prince, Shōtoku Cults and the Mapping of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, 23.
11 Uejima Susumu, *Nihon chūsei shakai no keisei to ōken*, 464–496.
12 Herman Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan: The Tenmu Dynasty, 650–800*, 154.
13 Gina Barnes, *State Formation in Japan, Emergence of a 4th Century Ruling Elite*, 178–183.
14 Edward Kidder, *Himiko and Japan's Elusive Chiefdom of Yamatai: Archaeology, History and Mythology*, 132.
15 Michael Como, *Weaving and Binding: Immigrant Gods and Female Immortals in Ancient Japan*.
16 Ross Bender, "Review of Michael Como, *Weaving and Binding: Immigrant Gods and Female Immortals in Ancient Japan*."
17 Livia Kohn, "Taoism in Japan: Positions and Evaluations," 391.
18 Anna Seidel, "Chronicle of Taoist Studies in the West 1950–1990," 301.
19 Livia Kohn, "Taoism in Japan," 407; Anna Seidel, "Chronicle of Taoist Studies," 304.
20 James Robson, "Daoism," 1792–1794.
21 Anna Seidel, "Chronicle of Taoist Studies," 299; Jeffrey L. Richey, "New Views of Early Japanese Religions," 95.
22 Bernard Faure, "A Religion in Search of a Founder?" 3.
23 Hayashi Makoto and Matthias Hayek, "Editors' Introduction: Onmyōdō in Japanese History," 5.
24 Masuo Shin'ichirō, "Chinese Religion and the Formation of Onmyōdō," 39.
25 *Fangshu* refers to a range of practices performed by specialists of the occult in early China; Masuo Shin'ichirō, "Chinese Religion," 21.
26 Kristina Buhrman, "The Stars and the State, Astronomy, Astrology and the Politics of Natural Knowledge in Early Medieval Japan," 183–217.
27 Benedetta Lomi, "Dharanis, Talismans, and Straw Dolls, Ritual Choreographies and Healing Strategies of the Rokujikyōhō in Medieval Japan," 255–256.
28 Kuroda Toshio, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," 6; James Robson, "Daoism," 1792–1794; James Dobbins and Suzanne Gay, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion: An Essay by Kuroda Toshio," 456.
29 James Dobbins and Suzanne Gay, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," 457.
30 Timothy Barrett, "Shinto and Taoism in Early Japan," 26–27.
31 John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*, 20–21.
32 Allan Grapard, *The Protocol of the Gods*, 12.
33 Rambelli and Teeuwen, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*, 4.
34 Grapard, *The Protocol of the Gods*, 13.
35 Bernard Faure, "*The God Daishōgun: From Calendar to Cult*," 217.
36 Teeuwen and Rambelli, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*," 6; Anna Andreeva, "Medieval Shinto: New Discoveries and Perspectives," 350.
37 Teeuwen and Rambelli, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan*," 50.
38 Anna Andreeva, "The Karmic Origins of the Great Bright Miwa Deity," 247.
39 Lori Meeks, "The Disappearing Medium: Reassessing the Place of Miko in the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan," 217, 255.
40 Abe Ryūichi, "Scholasticism, Exegesis, and Ritual Practice: On Renovation in the History of Buddhist Writing in the Early Heian Period," 184.
41 Mikoshiba Daisuke, "Empress Kōmyō's Buddhist Faith: Her Role in the Founding of the State Temple and Convent System," 37.
42 Abe, *The Weaving of Mantra*, 30–31.
43 Mikaël Bauer, "Monastic Lineages and Ritual Participation: A Proposed Revision of Kuroda Toshio's *Kenmitsu Taisei*," 50.
44 Tomabechi Seiichi, "Heian ki Kōfukuji ni okeru Shingon shū ni tsuite," 418; Mikaël Bauer, "The Power of Ritual: An Integrated History of Medieval Kofukuji," 137–154.

45 McCallum, *The Four Great Temples*, 4.
46 The *Shoku Nihongi* notes, in an entry for 703, that the four temples at that moment were Daianji, Yakushiji, Gangōji, and Gufukuji. In 735 the same source omitted Gufukuji and mentions Kōfukuji instead. See Deal and Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, 49; McCallum, *The Four Great Temples*, 158–159.
47 Abe, *The Weaving of Mantra*, 4; Richard Bowring, *The Religious Traditions of Japan, 500–1600*, 55.
48 Ihara Kesao, *Nihon chūsei no kokusei to kasei*; Mikaël Bauer, "The Power of Ritual," 248.
49 Takayama Kyōko, *Chūsei Kōfukuji no monzeki*.
50 Mikael Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, 347.
51 Kuroda Toshio, "The Buddhist Law and the Imperial Law," 276–277.
52 Kuroda, "The Buddhist Law and the Imperial Law," 275–276.
53 Adolphson, *Gates of Power* 10.
54 Adolphson, *Gates of Power*, 351.
55 Ihara, *Nihon chūsei no kokusei to kasei*, 16–17.
56 Ihara, *Nihon chūsei no kokusei to kasei*, 45–46.
57 Okano Koji, *Heian jidai no kokka to jiin*. For a discussion on Okano see Ruppert, "Constructing Histories," 358–359.
58 Minowa Kenryō, *Nihon bukkyō no kyōri keisei, hōe ni okeru shōdō to rongi no kenkyū*; Kusunoki Junshō, *Girei ni miru Nihon no Bukkyō: Tōdaiji, Kōfukuji, Yakushiji*.
59 Ruppert, *Jewel in the Ashes*, 266–267.
60 Bryan Lowe, "Buddhist Manuscript Cultures in Premodern Japan," 289.
61 Bauer, "The Power of Ritual," 17–18.
62 Lowe, "Buddhist Manuscript," 295; Lowe, "The Discipline of Writing: Scribes and Purity in Eight-Century Japan," 228–229.
63 Max Moerman, "The Archaeology of Anxiety: An Underground History of Heian Religion," 266.
64 Heather Blair, *Real and Imagined: The Peak of Gold in Heian Japan*, 1–16.
65 For a detailed overview of the state of the field regarding this tradition, see Gaynor Sekimori, "Shugendō: Japanese Mountain Religion – State of the Field and Bibliographical Review."
66 Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara, *Pilgrims, Patrons, and Place*.
67 Martin Kern, *Text and Ritual in Early China*.

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16
The historical demography of Japan to 1700

William Wayne Farris

Population is one the most important variables in history. Demography encompasses the study of fluctuations in the numbers of persons over time; but also examines vital statistics (fertility, mortality, and life expectancy), migration, and a whole range of historical phenomena that affect those factors. As such, population studies may convey an overall sense of the popular well-being during any given period. It is one of the few disciplines that attempts to embrace all of the populace, from aristocrats down to slaves.

The period under consideration in this chapter ranges from the Paleolithic Era (35,000 BP) to about 1700. I chose the latter date because most scholars believe that it represents the end of a long cycle of population growth and the beginning of stasis. Japanese historical records provide a wealth of information on this venerable epoch.

During the prehistoric Paleolithic, Jōmon (10,500 BCE–900 BCE) and Yayoi (900 BCE–250 CE), scholars have used archaeological evidence to evince demographic trends, vital statistics, and patterns of migration. Little is known about population during the Tomb (*kofun*) epoch (250–650 CE), but the ensuing two centuries provide the best demographic record for any society in the world at that time. Evidence is more fragmentary for the Heian period (794–1185), although archaeological and some written records shed light upon this long era. The Kamakura epoch (1185–1333) is similarly poorly documented. For the Muromachi (1333–1573), Warring States (1467–1600), and first century of the Tokugawa era (1600–1868), there is a wealth of archaeological data, death registers, and village records that help scholars understand these times in their demographic context. Despite the historiographical riches, controversy swirls around the field for many periods.

The theory of Japan's four demographic cycles

In 1983, Kitō Hiroshi propounded an overarching theory to describe population fluctuations in Japan from the origins of human habitation through the twenty-first century.[1] According to Kitō, Japan had endured four long cycles of population boom and bust, beginning with the age of affluent foragers known as the Jōmon. Together, the Paleolithic and Jōmon comprised the first cycle, with population topping 260,000 around 4,300 BP, and then dropping to about 70,000 at the end of the Jōmon era.

The second cycle encompassed the prehistoric Yayoi, protohistoric Tomb, and the fully historical Nara (710–794), Heian, and early part of the medieval period, to about 1300–1500. Between 900 BCE and about 800 CE, Japan's population grew rapidly to over six million, as new livelihoods, such as farming, were introduced, and new and better tool technology became available with the transfer of iron and other metals, all from Korea. Beginning around 800, Kitō reasoned that Japan's population had reached the limits of growth possible under the contemporary agricultural and economic regimes. The causes for this long period of demographic stasis were left unclear in 1983; in the 2000 work Kitō cited the effects of killer epidemics and famines as possible reasons for that downturn. More problematically, Kitō had drawn his figures for population during the early tenth and late twelfth centuries from land records, assuming that the land had been measured accurately and that almost all residents of the archipelago were rice farmers.

The third cycle began between 1300 and 1500 and ended during the 1860s. Once again, new technologies, better crop yields, and more land under cultivation fed a long growth cycle that lasted until around 1700. Kitō inferred a mammoth population for Japan in 1700: over 31 million. Beginning about 1720, Japan's population once again reached the limits of growth under that system, as famine, disease, efforts at population control, and other factors held the population steady at about 30 million or slightly less.

The final cycle coincided with the development of modern Japan. Beginning in 1870, population multiplied, held back only by the disaster that was World War II. After 1945, the population picked up where it had left off and reached a high of about 123 million in the early 2000s. Beginning around that time, Japan's population commenced to shrink, primarily because of low fertility and the rapid aging of the populace. By 2050 or so, Kitō calculated that Japan's population will have dropped to about 75 million.

Based as it is on the available figures for Japan's long past, Kitō's work provided a brilliant synthesis that was breathtaking in its scope. Even today, it is the starting point for any discussion of Japan's demographic history. Scholars have, however, raised some questions about Kitō's first two and a half cycles.

First, the figures for the prehistoric Jōmon period were based on the work of archaeologist Koyama Shūzō during the 1970s.[2] He used contemporary archaeological remains and many have expressed skepticism about his research methods.[3]

Second, Kitō reasoned that the population of eighth-century Japan was around six million, based on the venerable work of Sawada Goichi during the 1920s.[4] Today, nearly all historians accept a figure of six million for the eighth century, but apply Sawada's number to differing decades and thus view the late 700s as an era of sizable growth or the beginning of stasis.

Third, Kitō's methodology for deriving population estimates for 900 (about 6.4 million) and 1150 (6.8 million) are open to considerable doubt. Kitō used two records purportedly including all the *rice* paddies under cultivation and then divided that total by the amount of land supposedly necessary to support one person during the 700s. Both Charlotte von Verschuer and I have been roundly critical of Kitō's method.[5]

Fourth, Kitō left the date for the transition from the end of cycle two to the start of cycle three unclear at 1300–1500. And fifth, Kitō never explained how the violent and famine-ridden Warring States' period could have been a period of rapid growth, to as many as 15 million. Notwithstanding these considerable doubts, however, Kitō's theory of the four cycles remains the most widely accepted interpretation of Japan's demographic history.

The demography of the Jōmon period

In 1978, archaeologist Koyama Shūzō derived population figures for the age of affluent foragers known as the Jōmon Era. His method for this daring undertaking was as follows: First, he enumerated the total number of archaeological sites throughout Japan as of 1965. This was relatively simple, as a government agency known as the "Committee for the Preservation of Cultural Treasures" (*Bunka zai hogo iinkai*) kept updated figures. Second, Koyama established a baseline population for Japan during the 700s (5,400,000) based on the work of mathematician Sawada Goichi (see below). Third, he inferred a size for villages in the relatively well-documented Kanto region, and using an archaeological periodization that included five divisions for the Jōmon period, one for the Yayoi, and one for the eighth century. He stipulated that the population for the early Jōmon, for example, was one-twentieth that of the eighth-century figure, while middle and late Jōmon were one seventh the size of eighth-century villages, and so on. Fourth, he determined the average size of an eighth-century village by dividing the number of excavated villages into Sawada's figure for Kanto population (943,000 divided by 5,549 equals 170). Fifth, he derived the population for the mid-Jōmon Kanto by multiplying 170 by one-seventh by the number of Jōmon villages (3,977), or 96,000. Sixth, he applied the same method for all five sub-periods of the Jōmon Age to fourteen regions of Japan ranging from the northern tip of Honshu to the southern edge of Kyushu.

Clearly, both Koyama's methods and results may be easily criticized. The data he used are now about fifty years out-of-date. What would a similar calculation look like using current data on Jōmon villages? It is also unclear how Koyama derived the fractions he employed to infer Jōmon population from the eighth-century data. Finally, the number he used for eighth-century Japan may have been too small. For these reasons and undoubtedly many others, students may be skeptical of Koyama's calculations.

Still, certain aspects of Koyama's work ring true. First, his figures show Jōmon population at 20,100 around 8100 BP, 105,500 about 5,200 years ago, 261,300 at 4,300 BP, 160,300 at 3,300 years ago, and 75,800 at the end of the Jōmon period. This rise and fall of population is consistent with what we know of the gradual spread of a foraging regime, its reaching a height of popularity, and the decline that took place as Jōmon persons found foraging to be more difficult in a harsher climate.[6] Second, his regional calculations suggested that Jōmon forager occupations succeeded best in northern and eastern Japan, and poorly in western Japan. For example, the southern Kanto was home to about 71,000 people around 4,300 BP while the Kinai and vicinity had only about 2,700 persons. These figures correspond well to what archaeologists know about regional variations during the Jōmon Age. Koyama's findings, therefore, remain useful and generally persuasive, at least until another qualified scholar develops a superior methodology.[7]

Nevertheless, Koyama's is not the only noteworthy demographic work on the long-past Jōmon era. Kobayashi Kazumasa utilized the wealth of skeletal evidence from this time to infer life expectancy.[8] Altogether, some 5,000 skeletons survive from the Jōmon period, preserved because bodies were buried in shell mounds in which the basic chemical composition kept Japan's normally acidic soil from consuming the bones. Examining 235 skeletons from different Jōmon sub-periods, Kobayashi determined that 133 were adult males and 102 were females. Kobayashi suggested that his sample did not show much variation by period, and argued that men lived to about 34 and women to 24. Kitō has argued that the difference was due to premature death in childbirth, but nobody knows for sure. Almost half the individuals in the sample died in their twenties, and few lived to fifty. Finally, this short lifespan encompassed only those who lived beyond fifteen. When the whole population is averaged in, life expectancy at birth for both men and women was only 14.6 years. In other words, during the so-called age of "affluent foragers," the population was just barely able to reproduce itself.

Population during the Yayoi and Tomb periods

Beginning with the Yayoi period, about 900 BCE, Japan's population must have entered a long phase of growth. The primary causes for the demographic boom were the importation through southern Korea of agriculture, especially wet-rice farming, and the introduction of new and better tool technology using iron. The older forager livelihoods did not die out, but fared best in eastern and northern Japan, where remnants of the older Jōmon population, genetically dissimilar to the new Yayoi people, retreated to hunt, fish, and gather. No one knows for sure the extent of population gain, but there are at least two estimates. Kitō has given a figure of 594,900 for 200 CE, but the basis for his claim is unclear. One of the world's leading archaeologists for the Yayoi period, the late Sahara Makoto, stated that by the end of the Yayoi period, around 250 CE, Japan may have contained 1.5–4.5 million people.[9] If accurate, Sahara's estimate would equal *at least* a ten-fold increase over Jōmon numbers. This guesstimate—its basis is never made clear—reflects Sahara's belief that the Yayoi age marked the inception of widespread wet-rice cultivation, especially in formerly under-populated western and central Japan.

Demographers have devised another fascinating set of figures for the Yayoi and Tomb periods. Using Koyama's figures for the Jōmon and Sawada's number of around six million for the 700s, anthropologist Hanihara Kazurō has estimated that substantial migration from southern Korea to Japan took place over the Yayoi and Tomb periods.[10] According to Hanihara, the gains between the end of the Jōmon epoch and around 700 would have meant a natural growth rate of 0.427 percent per year—extraordinarily high in comparison with other places in the world during the first millennium. He presumes that the natural growth rate would have been closer to 0.1 percent per year, although he does not explain his reasons. For Hanihara, the difference must have been made up from overwhelming in-migration to the Japanese archipelago from Korea. While he gives no figures for the Tomb era, Hanihara estimates that during the Yayoi period 3,000 persons *per year* immigrated to Japan. Because Hanihara assumes (wrongly, according to most archaeologists) that the Yayoi period was 600 years long, the total number of immigrants for the Yayoi period alone would have amounted to 1,800,000 persons.

Reactions to Hanihara's "Dual Structure Hypothesis" have been mixed. On the one hand, Mark Hudson has endorsed Hanihara's basic idea of large-scale immigration from southern Korea to western Japan, arguing that the genetic makeup of the modern Japanese was substantially altered by the influx of people during the Yayoi period and later.[11] (Hudson, however, declines to provide figures for this in-migration.)

Keiji Imamura, on the other hand, argues that the rate of increase advocated by Hanihara (0.1 percent/year) is much too low and believes that much of the increase must have been due to rising fertility based on occupational and technological improvements.[12] In any case, most demographers have concluded that whatever the amount of in-migration to Japan, it must have been large to help account for the dramatic growth of population between the end of the Jōmon and the 700s.

The remarkable eighth century

Japan's eighth century, often called the Nara age (710–794), is unique in world history because of the wealth of information available to us about many aspects of life. Law codes and other regulations portray institutional structures in some detail. Archaeological excavations are varied and plentiful. Literary sources such as the classic poetry collection *Man'yōshū* combine compositions from all levels of society. Most importantly for demography, about 10,000 documentary fragments have been preserved in the ancient storehouse in Nara known as the Shōsōin. These

Shōsōin documents, particularly the household and tax registers (*koseki; keichō*), provide insights into population unavailable for any other society during the 700s.[13]

Sawada Goichi (1861–1931) was the first scholar to make a lasting contribution to Nara demography by estimating a total population of 6–7 million for Japan during the reign of Emperor Shōmu (724–749). This amazing feat he accomplished by two methods. First, referring to an early tenth-century legal source (the *Engi shiki*, or "Ordinances of Engi") that listed the total number of rice sheaves loaned out as a tax for each of Japan's sixty-six provinces, he utilized a regulation (*kyaku*) from lonely Mutsu province in 815 enumerating the total number of taxable males for that province to calculate the number of taxable males per 1,000 rice sheaves. That number was 27.07. Then, availing himself of the most accurate household registers for the eighth century, he derived the proportion of taxable males to the rest of the population, added the two together, and found the total commoner population at 5.5 million. Combining that total with the urban population of Nara and the tally for slaves and vagabonds, Sawada reasoned that the total population for early Nara Japan was 6–7 million.

Sawada then utilized a second method to arrive at a similar figure. He began by citing a 747 order enumerating the desired number of taxable males in "sustenance households" (*fuko*), a type of aristocratic revenue source. Availing himself of extant household registers, Sawada calculated that the average administrative village (*gō* or *ri*) contained about 1,400 persons. He then multiplied that figure by the total number of villages listed in an early tenth-century source called the *Wamyō shō* and once again came up with a commoner population of 5.5 million and total of 6–7 million.[14] As the dean of Japanese demographers, Hayami Akira, has stated, Sawada's estimate comprises the one figure for pre-1700 Japan upon which scholars can rely.

Even so, various historians have toyed with Sawada's methods to suit their agendas. Kamata Motokazu of Kyoto University authored the most serious of these challenges. Reasoning that the number of taxable males included in "sustenance households" was artificially high to benefit aristocratic recipients, he recomputed the size of the average administrative household at only 1,052. Then multiplying by the total administrative villages contained in the *Wamyō shō*, Kamata arrived at a total population of 4,251,132 for Japan around 747, and posited that Japan's population had grown to six million or so by 800.[15]

To be sure, some may have reservations about Sawada's estimate. For example, with regard to method one, how can anyone be certain that the number of taxable males in sparsely settled Mutsu in northeastern Japan could be representative of the more densely populated regions of Japan? Certainly his estimate for Nara (200,000) was too high; a figure of 70–100,000 seems more reasonable.[16] Moreover, how can an early tenth-century total of villages found in the *Wamyō shō* fit Japan during the mid-700s—as it is assumed to in both Sawada's method two and Kamata's calculation? Sawada's estimate may have been widely accepted, but doubts could be entertained about its exactitude.

As often happens in Japanese scholarship, an archaeological discovery lent unexpected support to Sawada's work. Excavation at a site located in the northern Kanto uncovered lacquer-soaked records, one of which listed the population for Hitachi province at 192,000.[17] As interpreted by Kamata, the total population for archaic Hitachi province would have been about 224–244,000, just a tiny fraction more than Sawada's 217,000. Now scholars had independent corroboration for Sawada's estimate and his methods. Writing in 2009, I also gave implicit support to Sawada's work, estimating Japan's population between 715 and 739 at 5.8–6.4 million.[18]

I made another lasting contribution to the study of Nara population in 1985.[19] Japanese historians had long known of a smallpox epidemic that had struck the archipelago during 735–737. The world historian William McNeill had had access to a translation of Japanese disease materials originating from the late seventh to the thirteenth century and had proposed that ancient Japan

suffered from recurrent epidemics striking a populace with little or no immunity, killing off massive numbers, and then burning itself out, only to reappear and wreak the same havoc a generation later. In McNeill's words, these outbreaks of pestilence "must have cut repeatedly and heavily into Japanese population, and held back the economic and cultural development of the islands in a drastic fashion."[20]

Utilizing the "McNeill thesis," I uncovered evidence of the massive smallpox epidemic of 735–737. Narrative sources portrayed the plague as truly horrific, a catastrophe unknown in Japan for several centuries. The Nara court even issued two long orders explaining to the populace how to care for itself during the outbreak. Most importantly, I used data obtained from records on rice loans to infer mortality over a wide swath of Japan: 25–33 percent for the three years. On the basis of this and other evidence, I lent my support to the McNeill thesis. The eighth century and the figure of six million or so seemed to represent the end of the long growth cycle that had begun with the Yayoi period. Subsequent archaeological and other evidence has bolstered this conclusion.[21]

Disease was not the only cause for the eventual halt to population growth by the late eighth century. Examination of famine records suggested that the commoner populace was chronically malnourished, suffering from a widespread famine once every three years.[22] Finally, during the eighth century, the Nara court financed the construction of as many as five massive capitals and uncounted aristocratic mansions and Buddhist temples. All this building apparently took a large toll on the lush forests of the Kinai region (Kyoto–Osaka–Nara). Tiles and timbers were recycled in the late 700s to raise the palaces at Nagaoka and Heian, and tile-makers cut their wood from a poor secondary forest cover for fuel. Erosion followed.[23]

I also made another lasting contribution to Nara demography. The Shōsōin collection contained numerous raw population data that included the sex and age of village inhabitants. Under the expert guidance of Kobayashi Kazumasa of Kyoto University, I compiled the data into population age pyramids by sex. I then submitted them to a comparison to various population pyramids from around the world.[24]

Remarkably for census data gathered in the early 700s, four of the comparisons yielded credible results for fertility, mortality, life expectancy, and infant deaths to age five. One result is summarized in Table 16.1.

While the achievement was considerable, scholars may question the method. Although the Nara population pyramids fit most closely into "Model West" containing modern Japanese age and sex data, the difference between one outcome and another slightly different one was small. Then, too, I had had to hold both the life expectancy and the growth rate—the two parameters in the population tables—as unknowns. Finally, the raw data had required some mathematical smoothing to achieve any result at all.

Yet the story told by these statistics and the others was unsurprising. Both fertility and mortality were very high; the birth rate suggested that women were having children almost all the

Table 16.1 Vital statistics for Mino province in 702

Birth rate: 51.21 persons/1,000
Death rate: 40.21 persons/1,000
Growth rate: 11 persons/1,000
Life expectancy at birth: 27.75 years
Infant mortality to age 5: 53.39 percent
Average age at death over age 5: 41.56

Source: Shōsōin monjo, in *Dai Nihon Komonjo,* vol. 1. Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1901.

time. Life expectancy was low, with a majority of the population not reaching age five. If a person lived beyond five years, then he or she could expect to live to about forty. These figures seem to reinforce Thomas Hobbes' characterization of life "in a state of nature" as "nasty, brutish and short." Moreover, the reader should realize that these figures are derived from Mino province, during a time in which no famines or epidemics were recorded. During harsh times, fertility undoubtedly plunged, mortality spiked, and life expectancy probably dropped below twenty. For those living during the eighth century—even aristocrats—life was hard indeed.

Japan's population during the Heian and Kamakura periods: 800–1300

In contrast to the amazingly well-documented eighth century, the next five centuries force demographers to assemble bits and pieces of evidence to evince population trends. A few figures seem to be more reliable than others. For example, the nineteenth-century scholar Yokoyama Yoshikiyo (1826–1879) utilized a passage from *The History of the Sung Dynasty (Sung shu)* to derive a credible number for the era 947–1003.[25] The Chinese history quoted the Tōdaiji monk Chōnen as purportedly listing the number of taxable adults in Japan as 883,329 men. Yokoyama then assumed that there were five taxable males per household and that there were twenty-five persons in every household, based on the tenth-century *Twelve-Article Opinion Memorial* authored by Miyoshi Kiyoyuki (847–918). The total population was about 4.4 million.

As noted above, Kitō had inferred his own population totals for the Heian period (794–1185). For the mid-tenth century, Kitō used Minamoto Shitagō's encyclopedia (*Wamyō shō*). That work recorded the total number of rice paddies in Japan between 931 and 938 at roughly 862,000 *chō* (one *chō* equaled three acres). Believing that 0.16 *chō* was necessary to support one person over age six, Kitō divided and arrived at a population of 5,375,000. He then added 250,000 for urbanites and another figure for those aged six and under to infer a total population of 6,437,600 for all Japan around 950. In 2000, he adjusted this figure to a total of 6,441,400. Kitō derived a population total for 1150 in a similar manner. Utilizing what he thought was the total paddy land figure (926,000 *chō*) from a later encyclopedia named *Shūgai shō*, Kitō obtained a figure of 6,713,500. In 2000, he slightly revised that number to 6,836,900.

Kitō's calculations were groundbreaking, but scholars have expressed several doubts. First there is the question of how much rice paddy was indeed necessary to support a person? Kitō had applied a legal standard from the eighth century to arrive at his divisor, but one could be pardoned for wondering whether that standard worked equally as well during the mid-tenth and mid-twelfth centuries. Then, too, he had assumed that the only livelihood worth noting was rice farming, when it was clear that a substantial portion of the population was engaged in other occupations, such as dry cropping, fishing, logging, swidden agriculture, and many others. Finally, techniques of field measurement were often inadequate during the Tokugawa period and before, especially since lands included barren or uncultivated arable. It seemed that Kitō's inferences needed to be taken with a grain of salt.

In 2009, I tried to utilize the same sources but refine Kitō's method. First, I noted that Sawada and his rival Takigawa Masajirō had calculated the amount of rice paddy necessary to support one person at much higher levels than the legal norm. In other words, they believed that the divisor needed to be higher than 0.16 *chō*.[26] I averaged the estimates of Sawada and Takigawa and arrived at a divisor of 0.217. To allow for abandoned fields, I subtracted 25 percent from the totals in the two encyclopedias, a conservative estimate based on land records of the age. Dividing that lower total by 0.217 yielded 3,459,179 persons dependent upon rice farming.

Estimating the total number of folks living by occupations other than rice farming is difficult. Around 1600, Hayami Akira thought that only about 10 percent of the populace did so; other

estimates range much higher. For instance, during the eighth century dry cropping supported about 20–25 percent of rural folk. In the end, I multiplied my total of about 3.5 million by 1.4 to arrive at 4,842,851 rural commoners. Adding another 100,000 for city dwellers and about 600,000 for slaves and undetected persons, it seemed that Japan's population around 950 was about 5.6 million. Applying the same method for the figure from 1150 led to a total of 5.9–6.3 million.[27]

Even these attempts to use the rice paddy figures from the *Wamyō shō* and the *Shūgai shō* did not satisfy some. In a review of my work, Charlotte von Verschuer argued that my generous allowance for the population not consuming rice was insufficient and that the two sources could not be used in infer population.[28] There is, however, a rejoinder to Verschuer's argument.[29] The totals contained in the two encyclopedias may not have been actual land under cultivation, but rather a calculation of all economic activity computed in terms of rice. In this way, the issue raised by Verschuer becomes moot. When the populations for 950 and 1150 were tabulated over again with the figures from *Wamyō shō* (862,806 *chō*) and *Shūgai shō* (956,558 *chō*) representing all economic activity, the total populations come to 5.0–5.6 million in 950 and 5.5–6.1 million in 1150. In other words, Japan's population seems to have remained static between the late 700s and 1150, just as Yokoyama and Kitō had argued.

Reasons for a static population over the era 800–1150 are not difficult to find. Primarily, bouts with killer epidemics of smallpox, measles, mumps, dysentery, influenza, and other diseases seem to have taken a drastic toll on the population. I have cited two epidemics, one an unknown disease dating to 865–866 and the other a smallpox outbreak occurring during 993–995 as carrying off about 34 and 25 percent of afflicted populations, respectively. And smallpox—"the most terrible minister of death"—is recorded as visiting the archipelago every thirty years from the early eighth century until 1051. Influenza became a terrible scourge as the climate turned colder and wetter during the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. Finally, archaeological and cultural evidence records the widespread fear unleashed by disease during the centuries from 650 through 1150. Famine and ecological degradation added to the increased death rate.[30] In effect, stasis seems to be the most reasonable answer to the problem of what happened to Japan's population between 800 and 1150.

The transitional Kamakura epoch represents another time for which sparse sources make it difficult to infer demographic trends. I computed the only number that is even close to reliable in *Japan's Medieval Population: Famine, Fertility, and Warfare in a Transformative Age*.[31] Pointing to the extant Great Rice Field Registers (*ōtabumi*) dated to the early and middle Kamakura age (1185–1333), I noted that each contained data purporting to specify the total rice paddy acreage in scattered provinces. I combined these Land Registers into four groups: six from Kyushu, five from west-central Japan, and one each from the northern Japan Sea littoral and the Kanto plain. Decreasing the divisor to account for a modest improvement in agricultural productivity between 1150 and the 1200s, I then applied a method analogous to the methods used to compute population from the Heian period *Wamyō shō and Shūgai shō*. The results of these calculations suggested moderate demographic growth in Kyushu, stasis in west-central Japan, and decreasing population in eastern and northern Japan. From this method, I estimated the population of the Japanese archipelago around 1280 at 5.7–6.2 million. In other words, stasis was still the watchword in Japan as late as the end of the thirteenth century.

Objections can be lodged against this figure and the notion of continuing stasis for Kamakura Japan. Vershuer's criticism that a substantial population survived by occupations other than rice farming has particular weight, although the figures from the Great Land Registers, like those from the Heian period, can be considered records of all economic activity computed in rice, a commodity that has always had meaning as currency. Then, too, Toda Yoshimi proposed in 1967 that the late Heian and Kamakura epochs constituted an "era of widespread land clearance"

in Japan, such as occurred in Europe between 900 and 1150.[32] This view has fallen on hard times, however, in recent research.[33] Finally, Saitō Osamu, a demographer of the Edo period, has inferred a population for Japan in 1250 of 6.5 million, further buttressing my argument for demographic stasis during the thirteenth century.[34]

Intriguingly, disease clearly receded as a major mortality factor during the thirteenth century. McNeill cites evidence that both smallpox and measles, two deadly afflictions of the past, attacked mainly infants and young children by the mid-thirteenth century.[35] Sources mention only one rather benign new disease (chickenpox) during the epoch 1150–1280. Transportation and other factors affecting the transmission of microorganisms remained unchanged, and immunity levels had probably risen. The only pathogen striking with greater lethality and frequency was influenza, and therein lies an important hint for understanding the reason that population was static despite the decreasing role of parasites. If, therefore, the population of the archipelago remained about the same from the mid twelfth until the late thirteenth century, the reasons for stasis must have been different from those of previous centuries, suggesting an important change in Japan's demographic and economic dynamics.

In a word, climate induced three devastating multi-year famines: Yōwa (1180–1182), Kangi (1229–1232), and Shōga (1257–1260). In the first case, drought and heat crippled farming throughout much of western Japan, as the Ise Taira attempted to hold on to power during the Genpei War of 1180–1185. More importantly, unusually cold and damp climate induced the last two famines. Apparently, volcanic eruptions occurring throughout much of the world led to this climatic trend.[36] For example, during the Kangi famine of 1229–1232, it snowed in mid-summer. Death rates were apparently high—at one farm in central Japan, 16–22 percent of the population dropped dead in one month. At another, also in central Japan, the number of farming units shrank by 42 percent before and after the famine. Numerous other factors also indicate that the Japanese population starved for much of the thirteenth century.[37] War played an increased role in wreaking havoc with the food supply, as marauding troops stole food and abused peasants during the frequent conflicts of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[38]

To summarize: although the evidence is thin and admits of varying interpretations during the period 800–1300, the most reasonable conclusion seems to be that demographic stasis was the rule for these five centuries. In other words, these five hundred years constitute the end of Japan's second population cycle. Things were about to change, however.

The revival of growth, 1300–1700

Several factors suggest the beginning of transformative growth around 1300. The toll from pathogens, although a constant drain on the youthful population, seems to have dropped even further. Although there is uncertainty about the climate, it seems likely that there was a steady warming during the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and as the climate became more benign, the incidence of major famine fell to perhaps as low as once every ten years. A death register from Yūgyōji in the Kanto region suggests that while people were chronically undernourished, the most deadly period was 1346–1385, a time that coincided with hostilities known as the Wars Between the Northern and Southern Dynasties (1333–1392). Warfare became more deadly, not so much for combatants as for the general populace serving as victims of the marauding armies. Finally, economic revival sustained by agronomic, engineering, and social improvements in agriculture, as well as a commercial and industrial boom focused on western Japan, indicates the onset of continuing demographic growth.

I have estimated the population of the archipelago at 9.6 million using the relative size of armies. The reasoning works as follows: For the eighth century, when a draft army consisting

mostly of commoners was the law of the land, most experts agree that the largest number of troops that could have been raised from a population deemed to range from 5.8 to 6.4 million was about 110,000. From a reliable source for the mid-fifteenth century, I obtained a range for the number of soldiers that *could* have been outfitted around 1450. Scholars estimate that one warlord (*shugo daimyō*) on average fielded about 2,825 soldiers, both mounted and on foot. There were about thirty-seven of these lords, suggesting that all together *at the least* they could send 104,525 fighters into battle. Some *daimyō* administered more than one province, and so it can be argued that the figure of 2,825 fighters might be best applied to the total number of provinces (sixty or so). The Toki, for instance, ruled only one province (Mino), but provided more than 3,000 troops in 1433. If one multiplies 2,825 by sixty, then the highest total equals 169,500. The range for troops locally raised for battle is thus 104,525–169,500.

In addition, the central government of the time, known as the Muromachi shogunate, possessed its own army approximately equivalent to those of ten warlords' armies (28,250). The range for the grand total of all fighters that could have been committed to fight in 1450 thus runs from 132,775 to 197,750. Working by analogy from the figures for fighters and total population for the early 700s, I calculated a multiplier of 1.21. Applying this multiplier willy-nilly to the two Muromachi troop numbers, the population comes out to between 7.4 and 11 million, or an average of 9.2 million. Adding an acceptable total for urbanites, I arrived at an estimate for Japan's total population around 1450 of 9.6 million.

Given the many assumptions behind this number, one might easily entertain doubts. Was the ratio of maximal military forces the same in 730 as in 1450? Did samurai warlords take all their soldiers with them when they went fighting, or did they leave an unknown number at home? How well defined was the status of samurai around 1450? Therefore, the estimate of 9.6 million is not much better than a reasonable guess. Fortunately, Saitō Osamu has inferred a population of 10.5 million for the same date by working backwards from reliable figures of the Tokugawa shogunate.[39] Most evidence warrants the generalization that the years from about 1360 to 1450 comprised a "Muromachi heyday" during which the Japanese population resumed a fairly strong growth trajectory.

If the figures for mid-Muromachi Japan seem like guesswork and invite doubt and controversy, the same can also be said for the Warring States' era (1467–1600), during which many residents of the archipelago were almost continuously at war. Disease came back with a vengeance, as a new potentially deadly pathogen (syphilis) arrived with the Europeans in 1512. Famine trended much worse: four death registers (*kakochō*) recording the name and date of the deceased suggest that deaths began to spike between 1430 and 1460, and climbed again during 1490–1520. Finally, warfare became more and more deadly, both for combatants in ever-larger, better armed hosts and for innocent bystanders caught up amongst the hungry armies as they mowed down and stole crops, burned villages, and kidnapped commoners to resupply their forces.[40] Taken together, these extraordinary mortality factors suggest that the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were a time of little or no growth.

The death registers merit special attention because they reinforce the concept of the "spring hungers," a time in the late spring and summer when the grain from the previous year had been exhausted and before the new harvest in the fall. Consider these figures from the Hondoji death register including month-by-month mortality numbers from 1395 to 1600 for Shimōsa province in the Kanto.

As Table 16.2 shows, the populace of this Kanto province was more likely to die during the first half of the year, particularly during the first, third, fourth, and sixth months of any given year. Once the harvest had come in during the autumn, however, one's chances of survival improved markedly. Other surviving death registers exhibit a similar trend. In the event, it seems

Table 16.2 Deaths by month: Shimōsa, 1395–1600

Month	*Males*	*Females*	*Total population*
1	442	149	591
2	395	133	528
3	432	153	585
4	469	139	608
5	407	125	532
6	496	163	659
7	410	123	533
8	409	118	527
9	286	102	388
10	289	97	386
11	366	73	439
12	320	108	428
Total	4,721	1,483	6,204
Average	393.4	123.6	517

Source: Chiba-ken shiryō, *Chūsei-hen: Hondoji kakochō*. Chiba: Chiba-ken, 1982.

a reasonable hypothesis that the populace of much of the archipelago was almost always in a state of malnourishment during the Warring States' era.

Just when demographers would appear to feel assured that the population shrank or stayed about the same, however, a review of many other factors seems to suggest growth. These economic indicators imply the herky-jerky continuation of the agrarian, commercial, and industrial growth first taking place during the 1300s. Farmers kept on clearing small new parcels of land, building more and better irrigation works, and raising a greater variety of crops, enhancing productivity little by little. The commercial boom taking off in western Japan expanded to the Kanto and even northern Japan, as Warring States' warlords began developing the industrial and commercial potential of their growing domains. Free markets using cash sprang up. Transportation arteries were rebuilt and initiated afresh. New industries such as cotton textiles, architecture and stone fitting, and mining and metallurgy enriched the archipelago as never before.[41]

The figures proposed for the year 1600 after which most of violence ceased show how difficult it has been for demographers to read this era.[42] Yoshida Tōgo proposed the first guesstimate in 1911 at 18.5 million, reasoning that since Japan seems to have produced 18.5 million "bushels" (*koku*) of grain in 1600 and one bushel could support one person for a year, the solution was at hand.[43] After World War II, however, Hayami Akira rejected Yoshida's easy equation of one bushel with one person and extrapolating backward from the early 1700s figures of the Tokugawa *bakufu*, reasoned that the population in 1600 was a mere 6.2–9.8 million.[44] In 1975, he increased the number to 12.3 million.[45]

Criticism for Hayami's second figure was slow in coming, but in 1999 the Tokugawa period specialist Fujino Shōsaburō utilized fragmentary data from several domains throughout Japan between 1665 and 1734 to show that the growth rate during the seventeenth century was less than half the 1 percent proposed by Hayami. According to Fujino, since the growth rate was much smaller during the seventeenth century, the population of Japan must have been much greater than 12 million in 1600. Fujino suggested that Japan's population around 1600 was between 19.4 and 23.65 million.[46] Kitō and Saitō, both Hayami pupils, soon suggested much higher numbers than their mentor, 14–15 million and 17 million, respectively. At present,

Yoshida's guesstimate of 18.5 million appears to be not far wrong, despite the flaw in his reasoning.

The question is how to reconcile all these varying sets of fragmentary data. For example, if warfare took place only occasionally and the toll from disease and famine was great simply for the decades 1430–1460 and 1490–1520, then maybe considerable growth could have occurred and the estimates of Saitō or Yoshida are closest to the mark. On the other hand, if warfare was frequent and deadly and other factors trended worse, then perhaps Hayami's estimates are more accurate. No one knows for sure.

After 1600, Japanese entered a much more peaceful era. No new diseases entered the archipelago and the number of epidemic outbreaks trended dramatically lower. There was one severe famine occurring in the 1630s (the Kan'ei famine), but otherwise the inhabitants had more food than ever before. The increasing plentitude of grains and other foods is also suggested by extant death registers, as they show a temporary end to the "spring hungers" and a mortality curve more in line with a modern society. In many places, suspicious *daimyō* moved recalcitrant samurai off the land and into their castle towns, leaving peasants to farm peacefully on their own. Finally, a "marriage revolution" united former servants and slaves into new families, as they rose in status to become commoners. They cleared new land and improved agricultural productivity. Japan became a land of small independent farmers, while *daimyō* initiated a building boom that witnessed the rise of many new cities. There can be no doubt that population increased substantially between 1600 and 1721; Kitō's estimate of 31.3 million for the latter date is derived from Tokugawa bakufu census figures and is generally accepted.

The growth occurring during 1300–1700 transformed Japanese society. Prior to 1300, a chronic labor shortage induced by high mortality from disease, war, and famine gave rise to a static population. By 1721, the labor shortage was over, as agriculture, commerce, and industry all boomed. Society was now organized around the stem household (*ie*), the corporate village, and urban blocks. To be sure, growth always has its drawbacks; one was the denuding of Japan's forests in the construction boom. For this and other reasons, growth ceased around 1721, only to resume about 1870.

Japan's population in global perspective

If the population figures adduced for the centuries 100 CE–1721 are to be believed, Japanese society traveled an exceptional path to modernity. The reason for this statement is that Japan's population curve is a mirror image of those of Western Europe and China. I know of no other society in which population fluctuated in quite the way it did in Japan. This conclusion suggests that there are myriad paths to modernity; considering Western Europe's, for example, as paradigmatic is not warranted by these larger demographic trends. Demographically speaking, Japan followed its own path into the modern world.

Notes

1 Kitō Hiroshi, *Nihon nisen nen no jinkō shi*. Kitō later updated and expanded his work in *Jinkō kara yomu Nihon no rekishi*.
2 Koyama Shūzō, "Jōmon Subsistence and Population," 1–65.
3 Serizawa Chōsuke. *Sekki jidai no Nihon*, 152. Gina Barnes has also expressed reservations. Personal communication.
4 Sawada Goichi, *Nara chō jidai minsei keizai no sūteki kenkyū*, 143–310.
5 William Wayne Farris, *Daily Life and Demographics in Ancient Japan*, 20–27. Charlotte von Verschuer, "Demographic Estimates and the Issue of Staple Food in Early Japan," 337–362.

6 J. Edward Kidder, "The Earliest Societies in Japan," 58–80.
7 Serizawa, 152, has made a gross comparison of Jōmon population to that of the native Americans once inhabiting the west coast of North America and suggested 350,000 as an upper limit. This guesstimate does not use Japanese sites or data.
8 Kobayashi Kazumasa, "Jinkō jinrui gaku," 63–130.
9 Kanaseki Hiroshi and Sahara Makoto, *Kodai shi hakkutsu* 4 *Inasaku no hajimari*, 30.
10 Hanihara Kazurō, "Estimation of the Number of Early Migrants to Japan: A Simulative Study," 391–403, and "Dual Structure Model for Population History of Japan," 1–33.
11 Mark Hudson, *Ruins of Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Japanese Islands*, 59–81.
12 Keiji Imamura, *Prehistoric Japan*, 155–160.
13 William Wayne Farris, "Pieces in a Puzzle: Changing Approaches to the Shōsōin Documents," 397–435.
14 Sawada, *Nara chō jidai minsei keizai no sūteki kenkyū*, 143–310. See also Farris, *Daily Life and Demographics in Ancient Japan*, 5–6.
15 Kamata Motokazu, "Nihon kodai no jinkō ni tsuite," 131–154.
16 Kishi Toshio, *Kodai kyūto no tankyū*, 152–169.
17 This record may be found in *Kanoko C iseki urushigami monjo: honbun hen*, 105–110.
18 Farris, *Daily Life and Demographics in Ancient Japan*, 19. I arrived at this estimate by multiplying the median value for village population for both Sawada (1,400) and Kamata/Sawada (1,250) by the number of villages (4,012) listed in an early eighth-century source known as the *Rissho zanpen*. I then added in appropriate numbers for slaves (10 percent), urbanites (150,000), and undetected individuals (100,000).
19 Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land in Early Japan, 645–900*, 50–73.
20 William McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*, 125.
21 Farris, *Daily Life and Demographics in Ancient Japan*, 38–39.
22 Farris, "Famine, Climate, and Farming in Japan, 670–1100," 275–276.
23 Farris, *Sacred Texts and Buried Treasures*, 181–184; 190.
24 Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land*, 18–49.
25 Yokoyama Yoshikiyo, "Honchō korai kokō kō," 167–175. For a recent discussion, see Farris, *Daily Life and Demographics in Ancient Japan*, 4–5. For the record, I find this estimate somewhat dubious.
26 Sawada, *Nara chō jidai no minsei keizai sūteki kenkyū*, 463–469; Takigawa Masajirō, *Ritsuryō jidai no nōmin seikatsu*, 108–115.
27 Farris, *Daily Life and Demographics in Ancient Japan*, 20–27.
28 Charlotte von Verschuer, "Demographic Estimates and the Issue of Staple Food in Early Japan," 349–356. For the record, I find Verschuer's argument contradictory and unclear.
29 Farris, *Daily Life and Demographics in Ancient Japan*, 21–22.
30 See Farris, *Daily Life and Demographics in Ancient Japan*, 38–57.
31 See Farris, *Japan's Medieval Population: Famine, Fertility, and Warfare in a Transformative Age*, 13–26.
32 Toda Yoshimi, *Nihon ryōshu sei seiritsu shi no kenkyū*.
33 Farris, *Daily Life and Demographics in Ancient Japan*, 69–73.
34 Farris, *Japan's Medieval Population*, 26.
35 McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*, 124–125.
36 William Atwell, "Volcanism and Short-Term Climatic Change in East Asian and World History, c. 1200–1699," 29–98.
37 Farris, *Japan's Medieval Population*, 28–59.
38 Farris, *Japan's Medieval Population*, 59–66.
39 Farris, *Japan's Medieval Population*, 94–163.
40 Farris, *Japan's Medieval Population*, 164–220.
41 See Farris, *Japan's Medieval Population*, 220–261.
42 For the debate over the population in 1600, see Farris, *Japan's Medieval Population*, 165–171.
43 Yoshida Tōgo, *Ishin shi hachikō*.
44 Hayami Akira, "The Population at the Beginning of the Tokugawa Period," 95–105.
45 Hayami Akira et al., *Sūryō keizai shi nyūmon*, 42–49.
46 Fujino Shōsaburō, "Nōgyō kensetsu toshi katsudō to keizai seichō," 35–102.

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17
Village and rural life in medieval Japan

Pierre F. Souyri

Throughout the classical and early medieval periods, people who lived on the Japanese archipelago territory settled—when they were sedentary—in a scattered manner on public (*kōryō* or *kokugaryō*) or private estates (*shōen*), wherever there was land that could be exploited. The aggregation of inhabitants of those estates into villages (*mura* or *sonraku*) is the result of a phenomenon that emerged in its earliest configurations during the second half of the thirteenth century, most often in the western part of the country, and that grew in a continuous manner during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, until it became widespread throughout most of the land.[1]

Japanese villages, therefore, appeared, for the most part, during the latter half of the middle ages. This concentration of population within the framework of clustered settlements persisted during the next centuries without any major changes, other than the demographic growth leading the transformation of some villages into small towns. Peripheral regions of the archipelago, where the cultivation of lands often started at a later date, such as Tōhoku in the Edo period, are the only places where it is possible to observe a sizable development of group settlements into villages going back to the early modern period.

Historians have therefore pictured the evolution of rural life during the middle ages as following a fairly simple pattern, progressing from a domain-based society with scattered settlements to a village-based society with concentrated settlements. This change was a reflection of clear social changes: an increase in the weight carried by a peasantry now structured around village communities, a weakening of the power of feudal lords between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, and a new distribution of power between lords and peasants.

Those changes can be analyzed as reflecting an increasingly dynamic rural economy, or the development of commercial exchanges that helped open up the countryside, but also as the result of the feudal warfare that ravaged the country and sometimes forced inhabitants to self-organize and promote forms of political autonomy. Thus new permanent institutions—such as the *miyaza* (the assembly of the heads of village families that took place in local shrines), the *sō* or *sōson* (village communities)—as well as temporary ones, such as *ikki* (coalitions, or leagues of inhabitants) appeared within those villages. Those institutions in turn acquired rules regulating them, or even standardized rituals, that helped forge the symbolic unity of the village. The rural society that asserted itself in this way produced in turn a new state of conflict that found its expression in

a multitude of boundary disputes at the edges of the territories of neighboring communities that had become rivals, but also in some cases in the form of a powerful social insubordination that could lead to revolt (*tsuchi ikki* or *tokusei ikki*).

A large number of medieval historical archives have been published, accompanied by critical commentary. Sources on rural life in medieval Japan remain relatively sparse for the period before the thirteenth century (although there are a few documents that evoke rural life in the *Heian ibun*) but the spread of writing practices in the second half of the middle ages provides a clearer and more precise picture.[2] There are two distinct types of sources: those that emanate from people or institutions outside the village but that nonetheless describe its practices, and those emanating from the villagers themselves. As can be expected, sources of the former type are more plentiful than those of the latter type.

Accounts based on an experience of life among villagers are rare, but one must be pointed out: the quasi-ethnological account by Kujō Masamoto (1445–1516), an aristocrat of the Kyoto court who kept a diary during his stay from 1501 to 1504 in one of his estates in Hineno, not far from present Wakayama. This text, known under the name *Masamoto kō tabi hikitsuke* ("the charms of the travels of the noble Masamoto"), describes how Masamoto tried to place his estate, which was under threat of invasion by outside forces, under a regime of direct administration.[3] The work describes daily life in the village, the workings of the justice system, power relations between prominent local residents, rituals and holidays, the liveliness of popular noh theatre, and the like.

Most of the other sources that have reached us have to do with conflicts between village communities belonging to estates and the owner of said estates. Monastic communities kept archives and recollections of those conflicts more often than warrior families, and some of those archives are in a good state of preservation. One noteworthy example are the records of the Tōji monastery, which provide, sometimes over decades, a record of the conflicts that opposed the inhabitants of an estate (historians use the term *shōke no ikki* to describe them) to a steward, or even sometimes to the lord himself, or to a neighboring village.[4]

Archives emanating from village communities can be classified into two main categories. They can consist of sets of rules decreed by the community itself to organize cohabitation—for example practices on common land owned by the village, fishing practices, receiving foreign travelers, gambling, etc.—or of court judgments made against uncooperative or delinquent members—for instance the destruction of his house or his expulsion from the village.

Some village communities kept a large number of such texts in the local shrine, and some of these have reached us in a satisfactory state. This is the case for those found in the village of Sugaura on, near Lake Biwa, that record, over several centuries, the emergence of the power of the community, power struggles with lords and neighboring communities, methods for decision-making, and other matters.[5]

Finally, during a conflict that could lead to violence, the village could sometimes assemble to swear a common oath (*renpanjo*), describing the causes of this mobilization and demonstrating to the local deities the will of the confederate villagers to see their demands to the very end. Villagers thus formed leagues, bound by an oath, called an *ikki*. Most of these oaths were written down twice. One version was burned during the *ichimi shinzui* ritual, and its ashes mixed to the sacred water of the shrine where the inhabitants of the village were assembled, and drank by those who shared the oath. But another version of the oath was held in a secret place and dutifully preserved. This is how some of these documents were discovered during the twentieth century, usually hidden within shrines.

The conflictual nature of the period's society, often described by contemporary as the *gekokujō* ("the world turned upside down"), can be perceived through the extant written documentation.

But it should be emphasized that the paucity of written texts is inversely proportional to the importance they were felt to have. What appeared to be important for community life, as a proof of good faith, or as a manifestation of determination, was more readily preserved than more ordinary documents that have probably disappeared. This applies to the case of the villages themselves, but also to that of institutions outside the village, which kept those documents only in cases in which they were engaged in a conflict with the village. Hence, the elements of protest or rebellion within medieval Japanese rural society have possibly been overestimated.

The historiography of Japan was for a long time dominated by a Confucian view of history, which emphasized overriding political figures, such as emperors, ministers, warriors, and the like. The peasantry, and more generally the people, were largely absent from these representations. It is only since the beginning of the twentieth century that historians have begun to show any interest in a social history of medieval Japan that increasingly included villages and rural life.

It must, however, be noted that around 1920, a major change took place in the history of research. Some historians turned away from central records to focus on local sources, in order to better comprehend the social changes in the countryside at the level of an estate or a village. Makino Shinnosuke is probably the first historian to have tried to analyze those movements, in this case, in a monograph dealing with a single estate, during the fifteenth century, in which he showed how the evolution of rural society at that time should be placed within the slower process of the collapse of the traditional organization of land ownership, such as could emerge in the early middle ages.

The peasantry was also described in a more concrete fashion in their daily lives, in the mud of the rice paddies.[6] Miura Hiroyuki was the first to show any interest in the question of peasant leagues, and more specifically that of uprisings. Spurred on by the impact of the Russian revolution and the 1918 rice riots, Miura published in 1921 an article entitled "The Social Question in National History."[7] Thanks to him, medieval *ikki*, and, more generally, the social and economic history of medieval Japan were able to take their place as topics for research and reflection within the university.

During the war, Shimizu Mitsuo, who was one of Miura's students, wrote a great study on the relationships between *shōen* and villages during the medieval period that inspired many historians of the next generation.[8] But some were strongly reluctant to envision the peasantry as a historical subject. During the 1930s, the young Nakamura Kichiji wished to engage in work on the social history of the peasantry during the Muromachi era at the University of Tokyo. His professor, Hiraizumi Kiyoshi, the leader of the ultranationalist school of history known as *kōkukushikan* ("imperial point of view on history") gave Nakamura's work a frigid reception, asking whether pigs, too, had a history.[9]

Just after the war, many historians published great contributions to our understanding of the medieval rural society. We can, for example, cite Ishimoda Shō, whose landmark monograph, *Chūseiteki sekai no keisei* ("The Formation of the Medieval World") described the rural society of the Kuroda domain in Iga province between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries.[10] This work remains today one of the best studies of early medieval rural society, and has stimulated many young historians in their research on economic and social history.[11]

As early as the 1920s, the Marxist perspective increasingly influenced historians who embarked into the study of the social history of the peasantry, and this influence would remain significant until the early 1980s. Historians of this school attempted to demonstrate that the late medieval Japanese peasantry became more and more belligerent against the domination of the lords. The history of the peasantry thus became, for the main part, a history of class struggles, a movement of protest of the weakest against the well off, of resistance to exploitation, and a radical challenge to the structure of property.

Marxist historians of the post-war years produced a narrative of the history of Japan constructed in the following manner: Movements of peasant protest grew considerably in size during the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, in particular because they opposed the penetration of capital from usury into the countryside, and attempted to overthrow the established order—that of lords—by creating regional alliances—or, sometimes, socio-religious ones (*ikkō ikki*)—with republican aspirations. But those movements failed during the sixteenth century, in the face of the rise of the warlords, who constituted a highly structured feudal power, capable of confronting those organizations on the battlefield and of defeating them. The rise of a new, strong state at the end of the sixteenth century, at the origin of the Tokugawa regime thus built on the defeat of these peasant organizations, while, concurrently, the sword hunt carried on by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, as well as the later creation of a great land registry, were milestones in the "re-feudalization" of society or the "second feudal revolution."

This general narrative, presented here in a fairly schematic manner, nonetheless represented in its time a radical alternative to traditional history. It was the starting point for a blossoming of postwar research, and notably of monographs on specific estates or regions that showed in detail the contents of life in the countryside. The question of the very nature of the peasant classes was considered in a debate on whether medieval farmers were slaves, serfs, or free men.

For Matsumoto Shinpachirō, the feudal wars of the fourteenth century coincided with a key moment of the history of the emancipation of the peasant classes, a feudal revolution.[12] Araki Moriaki, for his part, attempted to show as early as 1953, in a series of articles on the land registry put in place by Hideyoshi (*Taikō kenchi*) and published in the journal *Rekishigaku kenkyū*, how rural society, dominated by a "patriarchal slavery system" transformed at the end of the sixteenth century into a society dominated by land owners controlling subjugated peasants that he likens to serfs. Suzuki Ryōichi, for his part, explained how, from the beginning of the second half of the fifteenth century, village communes that resisted the mighty were bedeviled by internal contradictions that opposed prominent peasants—who were beginning to form a middle class in the countryside—and small, poor peasants; and how it was this split within communes that led to the historical failure of the *ikki* movements during the sixteenth century. Peasants would thus have been, in a way, betrayed by the more prominent members of their community.[13]

During the second half of the 1950s, other Marxist historians, such as Inagaki Yasuhiko or Nagahara Kenji, criticized Suzuki for his overly schematic view, and asserted, for example, that the phenomenon of fleeing villages had never been as widespread as during the late sixteenth century. Those flights, whether individual, small scale, or collective, are widely reported in the sources, and seem to show instead a broadening of social resistance, as well as the rise of poor small farmers that seek the status of free men.

The first to shift the question and focus to practices, rather than the historical meaning of the phenomenon, was Yanagita Kunio, the founder of the Japanese school of ethno-folklore. In the late 1920s, Yanagita attacked the community of historians as a whole, criticizing a traditional positivist history that only paid attention to charters and official archives and was the source of a dry and meager history. He was equally censorious of social historians, who, in his view, pretend to be interested in peasants but in reality consider them only when they are crushed by poverty or when they declare war on the powerful. This, Yanagita charged, distorts perceptions of daily life in the countryside encompassed, inasmuch as peasants did not spend their lives starving or revolting.[14]

The issue, according to Yanagita, was to seize the reality of peasant life in its totality, in order to understand how societies in the past worked as a whole. Failing that, he writes, social historians simply reproduce the same pattern as traditional historians for whom political events

are the only "historical fact." Only natural disasters that strike peasant communities have been recorded in sources, but are they enough to write a history of the peasantry?

> Recent histories of the peasantry, even when their authors are unaware of this fact, give too much weight to violent events such as *ikki*. When we examine things over the long run, only disasters are brought to our attention. … And yet, our ancestors lived more often than not in peace, and entire generations never knew a single revolt. … Only considering written sources when attempting to understand the daily lives of people who themselves only had the most tenuous link to the written word cannot but lead to errors.[15]

He went on to encourage a history of daily life and the social practices of the peasantry that would include the methods of ethnologists.

A few historians, such as Nakamura Kichiji or Nishioka Toranosuke, heard the voice of the founder of ethnology in Japan. They were opposed to the narrowly nationalist views that were in fashion at the end of the 1930s and reaffirmed, through estate-centered or local monographs, the importance of constructing a history of peasant daily life that would integrate popular culture in all its aspects, including revolt. After the war, Nishioka published a particularly innovative work on the necessity of writing a history of the daily life of the people, the only method, according to him, by which to tear oneself away from a political history of the state and of the elites and to write "a true historical work."[16]

A second shift in the historiography took place around 1980. Influenced by Japanese ethnologists, some historians turned once more to research leaning toward the study of daily practices, founding a new wave that ended up being labeled *shakaishi* (social history) and became the starting point for a new form of historical anthropology. For them, the goal was to practice a true form of interdisciplinarity, to bring down the walls between narrowly defined fields, and to recognize the importance of sources that had previously been underestimated by traditional positivist historians. The new school embraced such diverse methodologies as the study of rituals, use of the results of archeological research, and fresh examinations of artistic and literary sources.

This group of historians, which included Amino Yoshihiko and Katsumata Shizuo, examined more specifically the links that existed not only between peasants and lords, but also the relationships between peasants and the non-farming residents of the countryside, which often included itinerant populations. They placed new importance on the analysis of rituals, and showed how villagers could use the sacred and manipulate it to impress on the mighty the legitimacy of their struggles. Accordingly, these scholars built a link between social history and popular religiosity. For Katsumata, *Ikki* means the institution by the group of an exceptional form of organization, which breaks the routine of daily life to raise the participants above their social condition. No one, before the birth of this historical school, had paid attention to such matters as the physical appearance of the rebels and its anthropological meaning. A new historical narrative was thus free to emerge, taking on a new shape which can be summarized as follows:

> For centuries, peasants clung to the land, which they were trying to take over from lords, usurers, and all sorts of people encroaching upon the land. This effort created its own ideology, one that justified a distinctive character of landowning in which cultivating rights should be inalienable. Scattered, mobile, and insecure financially, the peasantry attempted throughout the middle ages to stabilize their condition by persuading the mighty to recognize the particularities of their status as farmers, a goal they achieved gradually, by imposing village communities as a structure of counter-power to that of the lords. But just as their

goal was finally in sight, their condition was once more called into question by the penetration of capital from usury in the countryside.

The struggle against debt (to continue this argument) became the origin of tremendous social instability during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This fight did not end in complete defeat, contrary to what some Marxists believed. Quite the opposite, it led to a new "historical compromise" at the end of the sixteenth century, which was the source of the stability of the Tokugawa regime. Admittedly, peasant leagues were defeated one after the other. But those peasants dropped their weapons and renounced insurrectional leagues in exchange for the guarantee of the part of the new state that they would obtain land ownership and a new status, that of farmer, which was often said to be higher than that of other social groups such as merchants or craftsmen. This "compromise" ensured Japanese society a century and a half of prosperity, from the end of the sixteenth to the middle of the eighteenth centuries. It would thus seem that, deeply encroached within the people's mentality, there is a forgotten tradition in Japanese society of resistance, egalitarianism, and solidarity against the mighty, but also of struggles against injustice, which can lead to social violence and a questioning of authority, forcing the mighty to dodge and weave, to negotiate, and often to step back.

What can we say today of Japanese rural society that can be considered as certain and is not contested or questionable? It would seem that three central elements can be distinguished: continuous economic expansion of rural society during the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries led to a generalized betterment of the living conditions of the peasantry despite famines and the sorrows of war, which in turn brought improvements in agricultural production that led to the creation of independent village organizations (*sō*) and collective resistance by inhabitants against the lords.

Economic expansion

With the beginning of the medieval period, Japanese society entered a phase of economic expansion and increasing trade.[17] Because there are no quantifiable sources, it is impossible to measure the exact scope of this phenomenon. The few surviving documents show a society that seemed to be awakening from a long period of inertia. This ascent began with the great land-claiming movements in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and by the thirteenth century, the countryside seems to have been reshaped by the new economic situation. Although the clearing of land for rice paddies slowed, except perhaps in the western provinces, the domains seem to have been more integrated in the trade system of the archipelago. Also in the thirteenth century, peasants, especially in the Kinai and neighboring regions, began to free themselves from their position of servitude, a movement that expanded during the following two centuries. Economic and commercial progress helped create a rural middle class, which sought to gain control over its own affairs and eventually, to shake off the grip of the lords.[18] This improved economy was not, however, enough to avoid sometimes violent food crises. Nevertheless, overall the middle ages seem to have been a time of growth—slow in the thirteenth century, more rapid after the Mongol invasions, chaotic in the fourteenth century, and then reinforced in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially in Kinai and around the Inland Sea.

Agricultural production was organized within the framework of the estate economy. Whatever these estates were called locally and whatever their economic mode (wetland rice cultivation, dryland farming, exploitation of forests, horse pastures, harvest of seaweed and seafood, and salt production on the beaches), their internal organization was more or less similar. The land was controlled by wealthy peasants (*myōshu*) or low ranking warriors. These figures were the

heads of agricultural operations, and were responsible for rent payments and corvée. The *myōshu* had at their disposal the labor supplied by tenant farmers, to whom they rented land, and by servants, farmhands, and various dependents, whom they fed and lodged in return for their work. The written sources mention them only in passing, and so they remain part of the great silent mystery of Japanese medieval history.

Cultivated fields accounted for only half the total area of an estate. The rest was fallow and uncultivated land, woods, marshes, flooded sections and the like. These areas were indispensable, however, to the villagers, who counted on them as sources for firewood, and for the fish, edible ferns, and various tubers that were essential supplements to their diet. Control of the uncultivated parts of the estate thus gave rise to increasingly bitter conflicts between lords and peasants and between inhabitants of neighboring villages. Sources of the period supply two decisive clues: the rise of intensive agriculture based on two annual harvests, and the institution of rural markets on fixed dates.

Annual double cropping began in the mid-thirteenth century on the shores of the Inland Sea, where the climate was particularly favorable. This ingenious arrangement was no doubt aimed at circumventing the rigorous rent collection system. Landlords were very demanding about rents on rice paddies and frequently checked yields and field sizes, but they were much more lenient concerning dry fields, where the peasants grew crops for their personal consumption. Wider use of fertilizer made these agricultural advances possible. The increase in production due to the cultivation of new lands, and especially to technical improvements, provided the peasants with surpluses.[19]

Until the early thirteenth century, the rural estate economy was still almost self-sufficient. There was little trade, and all consumer products, except for iron and salt, were produced on the estate. By mid-century small, local markets had sprung up everywhere. Poor peasants brought their meager foodstuffs to sell: soybeans, sesame seeds, string beans, and hemp. Wealthier farmers traded in rice and barley. Traveling merchants came to sell lamp oil, paper, knives, iron hoes, fresh fish, salt, and sometimes fabrics. Even small, purely local markets, helped increase trade and circulate merchandise and introduced a rudimentary cash economy to even the most remote regions. Increased production and the development of trade were part of an overall social movement that was marked by the emancipation of the lowest class of peasants.

Although the agricultural economy was dominated by wetland rice cultivation, the importance of rice has no doubt been overestimated. Historians may have been led astray by written documents. Because the state and landowners paid greater attention to rice paddies and kept a written record of everything pertaining to this type of land, it might seem that other agricultural production was insignificant. Somewhat beyond the master's purview, however, dry fields, in which vegetables, hemp, and grains were grown, were carefully tended by the poorest peasants. These fields were the basis of their subsistence, just as the rice paddies were the source of the master's living and the source of most of the rents the masters were collecting. The importance accorded to rice paddies arose from the fact that the lords knew how difficult it was to clear such land. The peasant knew that although he could farm a rice paddy, he could not create it by himself; that the master was able to do so because he could supply the iron tools and requisition the labor to build the irrigation system.

The rise in agricultural production was linked to the labor of former serfs, who took over cleared parcels of land where they could grow food for themselves. A number of factors led to the overall expansion of agricultural society: the diffusion of certain agricultural techniques, such as double cropping and the use of fertilizer; the cultivation of dry fields, parcels to which the poor peasants were even more attentive, since they owned them; the intensive work of these farmers on their new holdings; and the sale of products in local markets. In medieval Japan, land

had a sure, tangible value. Every year, it supplied a harvest. That is why possession meant first the possession of land rights: for the lord, the right to administrate an estate and collect rents; for the *myōshu* peasant, the right to cultivate a series of paddies; and for the small farmer, the right—a new right—to exploit his holding. The affirmation of these rights was a central issue at the time.

Village life was regulated by seasonal agricultural work. In the thirteenth century, religious ceremonies and popular feasts were organized by the assembly of well-off peasants grouped in a shrine brotherhood, or *miyaza*. Although poorest peasants, servants, and serfs were excluded from organizing these events, they were allowed to take part in the festivities. Because the lords were not included, the ceremonies served to bring the village community together. This assembly of villagers offered a place for open discussion where decisions regarding worship (as well as repairs to the local shrine, preparation of ceremonies, and related matters) were made, and internal conflicts and various community problems were solved. Although decisions were made in a relatively democratic way, the participants were forced to honor their obligations, and were expected to uphold the village's sense of community in case of outside aggression.

The slow emancipation of the lower rural classes

Historians are divided on the real status of peasants in servitude. Their social condition has not been clearly established. Although it seems certain that there were slaves in the countryside until Kamakura and Nanbokuchō periods, it remains an open question as to whether this means that all serfs were slaves. Indeed, it seems that the *myōshu* did not use many slaves. Their agricultural labor was provided mainly by small-hold peasants (*kosakunin*) who worked on their own land. Thus they were not slaves but small independent farmers. They remained bound to the *myōshu*, who were registered as being responsible for payment of land rents on the landownership documents, and the only interlocutors with the lords or their stewards.[20]

But from the beginning of the fourteenth century, especially in the Kinai, the names of small peasants were noted in the registers, because they paid rents to the lord. Their names appeared also on documents written in common by the village peasants, a sign that they took part in making decisions that affected the community. What had changed in regard to social relations in the second half of Kamakura period? These peasants had clearly acquired a new position in the peasant community and now had a right to speak. By the Nanbokuchō period, they were sitting on the councils of the shrine brotherhoods alongside the wealthy peasants.

How had the serfs freed themselves? The burgeoning economy enabled the poorest peasants to accumulate a bit of surplus that they could take to the market, which led a general improvement in their life. But the key was dry land farming, because by growing the grain and vegetables that they needed for daily sustenance, the poorer peasants had become independent of their masters. The ascent of the lower peasant classes—former servants, serfs, and even slaves who has become small scale—was an essential aspect of the internal transformation of peasant society.

The villages

Sō or *sōson* were based on a high degree of community cohesion. The first *sō* mentioned in the archives were formed in the mid-thirteenth century, but their number grew considerably during the wars of the fourteenth century, and by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they were the basic units of the social system in the countryside. They drew up their own rules, independent of the lords' authority—and in fact, in reaction against that authority. The oldest written piece about a *sō* is a "secret document" kept in a shrine in the Lake Biwa region and dated 1262.[21] It

concerned people of Okitsushima who were embroiled in a conflict with the estate administration over fishing on the lake. The document called for a clandestine alliance of all inhabitants against the lord, and included the notion of *ichimi dōshin*, which means "community of spirits," and involved the willing participation of all, as desired by the gods. The vows and meetings took place within the context of the shrine's brotherhood, a village council (*miyaza*) that controlled worship of the local deities. Those who joined had their conviction reinforced by divine approval. They formed a league (*ikki*), which organized a unanimous solidarity among the inhabitants. "Those who break this agreement will be expelled from their land," warned the vow the villagers took.

No structured messianic or millenarian ideology supplied a conceptual justification for these peasant movements. The fact that resistance organizations were created in the context of assemblies of worship of the *kami* implies that the sacred was put to use for the cause. Conflicts involved *myōshu* and small-scale tenant peasants united in *sō* increased during the fourteenth century. Peasant communities drew their strength from their ability to resist feudal authorities, and from their exceptional degree of cohesion. The smallest defection from the association would spell the end of the *sō*.

During a general meeting (*sō* means "general meeting") held in a consecrated place, members swore that they would obey the rules. To disobey, then, was to break a sacred vow. Behind the acts of resistance of a peasant democracy stood authoritarian—even totalitarian—practices. The fight against the authorities and the leading classes required iron-fisted discipline and unquestioned unity. People who refused to bend to the law of the *sō* were expelled from the community. They were no longer helped with their agricultural work, their fields were no longer flooded, and they were shunned. There was nothing for them to do but leave the village.[22]

Peasant resistance to the landlords was based on a combination of religious and folk beliefs, an alliance between the divine and the community. Medieval rebels could call on the gods, to justify their struggle. Folk religion came to the aid of peasant defense organizations: beliefs in *kami* or Buddha were used to strengthen the union and the community, and those who acted against the common will risked divine punishment.[23]

The growing autonomy of communities that evolved into *sōson* often cost the local lords their administrative, political, and judicial authority. The communities gained legal recognition and became tax-collecting units, took over the right to manage their water (previously the lord's privilege), oversaw cleared land and forests, and organized to provide self-defense. They also formed protection leagues with other communes in the area (then creating *sōkoku*) and by reaching the old framework of the estate, these alliances caused the domination of the landowners to disintegrate. Some villages joined with others to manage local resources and valley waters. In several cases, however, bloody conflicts broke out when the *sōson* formed an alliance with a landowner or monastery in order to weaken a neighboring village.

Most communal villages organized themselves because of the inhabitants' desire to resist invasions by outside armies. The hamlets sprinkled across the estates were abandoned during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The peasants seemed to have withdrawn to their villages, which they intended to both defend and govern. This phenomenon, first apparent in Kinai, spread to regions, such as Kantō and even Tōhoku, where feudal warfare was almost incessant. Villagers deserted the insecure countryside, leaving it to outlaws and the armies that roamed the area, and banded together behind fortified works (which makes the screenplay of Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* film historically unlikely). Or they fled to the surrounding mountains in what they called *mura no shiro* ("castle of the village"), places in the mountains not easily accessible for those who do not know the region. With this process of consolidation came a concomitant strengthening of the inhabitants' councils that met at the local shrine. War thus often encouraged peasant solidarity.

The rules of the *sō* were discussed and adopted in meetings, and they evolved into administrative rules and legislation. For example, the *sō* needed funds to manage their autonomous units. The village ceremonies had to be held according to tradition. Irrigation systems had to be maintained constantly. Above all, large sums had to be set aside to cover the costs of trials in which the village might become involved. These needs were, in principle, fulfilled by the income from communal lands farmed by everyone, and by a tax that the *sō* charged to each house in the village. Unlike the landowners' taxes, taxes in the *sō* were collected and used by the village. The communes brought back the *kuji*, previously collected in the estates by the lords, in a new and egalitarian form. The commune also took over the judicial administration of its territory. Peasant society dealt severely with those who broke the unity of the *sō*, with a criminal act. The heaviest penalties were reserved for arsonists, thieves, and murderers. Because the village association was essential to the group's survival, it could not tolerate the slightest deviation from the common law. Theft earned the contempt of everyone because it betrayed the community spirit. Accordingly, it was punished with example-making penalties that were intended to create fear. To avoid any encroachment of the lord's justice on village justice, villagers in disagreement with the community did not have the right to approach any judicial body other than that of the village. There was no appeal possible to an external form of justice.[24]

To rebel for an act of grace (*tokusei ikki*)

With the introduction of a cash economy in the Kinai region, the small amounts of capital accumulated by peasants were forwarded to the great religious institutions, which controlled a large number of moneylenders and sake brewers. These wealthy institutions began to reinvest the capital they had amassed through usury, by buying up the land of peasants and low ranking warriors around Kyoto. Accordingly, in the Kinai, where double cropping was common, the surplus that should have remained in the hands of the peasants because of their increased productivity went instead into the pockets of moneylenders and usurers, thereby leading to the impoverishment of the rural dwellers, who then demanded the recovery of what have been taken from them. Direct representatives of the capital became the targets of social violence. In the fourteenth century, peasant uprisings in the estates usually broke out after the lords collected the annual rents, but in the fifteenth century, struggles to obtain a *tokusei* act ("act of virtuous government," or "act of grace") were struggles against debt and for a return of an old order that was seen better than the new one. Kasamatsu Hiroshi has written that throughout history, the peasant's latent consciousness was manifested through rituals.

For example, folklorists have pointed out that the groundbreaking ceremony after the first day of the new lunar year (generally in early or mid-February) had great symbolic value, for it made the land "come alive again" in springtime. The term *jiokoshi* ("awakening the land") also has a second meaning: the recovery of a piece of land by its former owner. This notion of renewal is linked to an old order that had been disturbed or degraded through history, and the uprisings were aimed at returning to that order, in which each thing had its place in a harmonious society. These ideas took the place of political thought. One could bring back the past by destroying the real world just as one could make the land come alive again by breaking the ground with a shovel during the *jiokoshi* ceremony.

Peasant uprisings aimed at canceling or lightening the debts through a *tokusei* edict often took place when political authorities were paralyzed for one reason or another, creating a power vacuum. The insurgents knew how to use the shogunate's hesitation—evidence of a very strong political awareness, according to postwar Marxist historians like Suzuki Ryōichi. Kasamatsu Hiroshi, however, sees them as a more common phenomenon linked to the amnesties accompanying a change in rule. A change of sovereign was often followed by a change in calendar era, and peasant

leagues saw these times as especially propitious for demanding or imposing an abolition of debts. This is why most of the major revolts for "virtuous government" followed "disasters," such as the death of a shogun, or a famine. People weakened by hunger and thought to be numbed by their miseries revealed, on the contrary, a stunning capacity for rebellion, as in 1462–1463, when the most violent uprising of the century took place just after the terrible famine of 1460–1461.[25]

A new rural middle class: the *jizamurai*

The clearest social phenomenon in the countryside between 1450 and 1550 was the appearance of a rural middle class composed of a relatively large number of village prominent persons. These men, who were designated in various ways (*dogō, jizamurai*, etc.) played a central role in internal village organization and began to distinguish themselves from the *myōshu* and the peasants. Rural society began to be clearly divided into two distinct categories: peasants (themselves also socially divided into those responsible for taxes, and small-scale peasants, tenant farmers, and landless dependents) and samurai, who accounted in certain parts of the western Japan for more than 20 percent of the inhabitants.

The enrichment of upper peasant classes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries gave rise to a new social category, between the wealthy peasants and the local landowners, whose members claimed warrior status by calling themselves samurai. Although they no longer worked in the fields, they still lived in the villages among the peasants with whom they felt a kinship. But they also differentiated themselves from the peasantry to whom they rented parcels of land to farm, by showing off their new social position: the samurai carried swords openly and owned horses. These village samurai or "land samurai" (the literal meaning of *jizamurai*), formed protective vassal links with the great feudal lords (*shugo daimyō*). In the fifteenth century, *jizamurai* were still close enough to the peasants to feel loyalty to their own kind, and they often led rural uprisings for cancelation of debts and promoting local autonomy. By the mid-sixteenth century, however, they were sufficiently detached from the peasantry that their material interests had also diverged. They then joined the vassal organizations that warlords had started to build, and helped expand the new feudal authority. As long as the sense of solidarity was strong, the *sōson* were almost invincible. But as soon as conflicts arose between samurai and peasants in the community, the village union fell apart.[26]

Thoughts for further research

Consequent to the deconstructionist discourses, which have also affected Japanese medieval historiography, the new generations of historians have turned their current questioning away from social structure as such and toward social practices and cultural representations themselves.

One of the main new themes of research is the permanent state of crisis implied by the recurring wars of the sixteenth century. In particular: How did peasants survive in times of war? How did they escape mass violence? What did they do in case of famine? In what capacity were they recruited into their lords' armies? And how did they practice the collective or individual abandonment of their villages?[27]

Another great shift in the historiography is a rising awareness of gender problems, which were almost missing in works published before 1990. While this research, reflecting the nature of the sources, speaks more about upper levels of Japanese society than about village society itself, some interesting new perspectives have appeared. Among the key issues here are the role of women in agricultural production and internal organization, separation or divorce among the families in the villages, the importance of patriarchal systems, and also the structure of families in the lower classes, especially those called *genin*.[28]

Today, historians seem less attracted to grand, general explanations, and engage instead in more specific studies. The era of great syntheses has not yet returned.

Notes

1 I will not take into account here the particularities of the social development of the northern island of Ezo (present Hokkaidō) or what was at the time, in the south, the Ryūkyū kingdom.
2 *Heian ibun* is a comprehensive compilation, with critical commentary, of historical documents produced the Heian era, edited by Takeuchi Rizō. Begun in 1946, it was completed for the most part in 1976. The collection contains more than 5000 documents. Takeuchi also edited *Kamakura ibun*, along the same lines, between 1971 and 1995.
3 *Nihon shi shiryō sōkan*, volume 1.
4 *Tōji hyakugō monjo* kept within the Tōji monastery, in boxes. This is an extraordinary archival fund of estate records, comprised of more than 25,000 documents, and relating among other things the difficult relationship between the ecclesiastical seigneury and the villagers of the Kami Kuze and Shimo Kuze estates in the Yamashiro province, those of Tara in Wakasa, or Ōyama in Tamba, well known to historians for their long tradition of resistance to the demands of the lords.
5 The collection is called the *Sugaura monjo*, and includes more than a thousand documents consigning the history of the village from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century.
6 Makino Shinnosuke, "Shōen seido hōkai no ichirei toshite no Kawaguchi- Tsuboe no shō no kenkyū."
7 Miura Hiroyuki, *Kokushijō no shakai mondai*.
8 Shimizu Mitsuo, *Nihon chūsei no sonraku*.
9 Nakamura Kichiji, *Do ikki kenkyū*. This work is a collection of articles, the earliest of which go back to 1932–1933.
10 Ishimoda Shō, *Chuseiteki sekai no keisei*.
11 For a good synthesis of work on *shōen*, with a convenient bibliography, see Abe Takeshi, *Nihon shōen shi*.
12 Matsumoto Shinpachirō, *Hōken teki nōchi shoyū no seitsitsu katei*.
13 It is important to note that this thesis is identical to the Leninist thesis on the worker aristocracy as cause of the reformist shift of the Western proletariat.
14 Yanagita Kunio, *Nōmin shi kenkyū no ichibu*.
15 Yanagita, pp. 400–401.
16 Nishioka Toranosuke, *Minshū seikatsu shi kenkyū*.
17 For a general view, see Takechi, *Tochi seido shi*.
18 Considerable research has been conducted on this theme. See for instance Miura Keiichi, *Chūsei minshū seikatsushi no kenkyū*, especially pp. 35–91; or Nagahara Keiji, *Shōen*.
19 Kitō Kiyoaki and Imaizumi Yoshio, *Taikei Nihonshi soshō*, 6, *Tochiseido shi* 1.
20 See Anno Masaki, *Genin ron*. Watanabe Daimon, *Jinshin baibai, dorei, rachi no Nihon shi* offers a new point of view on these questions, revealing the extent of slavery, human trafficking, and kidnapping in sixteenth-century Japan, especially in relationship with pirates' activities and wars.
21 *Ōshima Okitsushima jinja monjo*, Kōchō docs. 2, 10, 21.
22 Fujiki Hisashi, *Sengoku no sahō-mura no funsō kaiketsu*.
23 On these questions, see Katsumata Shizuo, *Ikki*.
24 The best synthesis is provided by Fujiki, *Sengoku no sahō-mura no funsō kaiketsu*. See also Fujiki Hisashi, *Chūsei minshū no seikai, mura no seikatsu to okite*.
25 Kasamatsu Hiroshi, *Nihon chūsei hōshiron*, and *Tokuseirei, chūsei no hō to kanshū*.
26 On the *jizamurai*, and their role in the village society, see Suzuki Ryōichi, *Nihon chūsei no nōmin mondai;* Nagahara Keiji, *Sengoku no dōran*; and Michael Birt, "Samurai in Passage: Transformation of the Sixteenth-Century Kantō."
27 This kind of study was initiated in the beginning of the 1990s. See Fujiki Hisashi, *Zōhyō-tachi no senjo*, and *Kikin to sensō sengoku wo iku*; Minegishi Sumio, *Saigai. senran no shakaishi*; Sakaba Satoshi et al., *Mura no sensō to heiwa*. More recently, Goza Yuichi, *Sensō no Nihon chūseishi*.
28 Tabata Yasuko, *Nihon chūsei no josei*; Minegishi Sumio, *Chūsei wo kangaeru kazoku to josei*; Wakita Haruko, *Nihon chūsei joseishi no kenkyū*; Hotate Michihisa, *Chūsei no onna no issho*; Tabata Yasuko and Hosokawa Ryōichi, *Jonin, rōnin, kodomo, Nihon no chūsei shi*, 4.

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18
Family, women, and gender in medieval society

Hitomi Tonomura

This chapter examines family, women, and gender, three topics that developed along divergent, but increasingly overlapping, paths of historiographical inquiry. In Japanese-language scholarship, "family history" (*kazokushi*) emerged in the late nineteenth century and initially tended to ignore the significance of women's roles within the family or within larger historiographical questions.[1] "Women's history" (*joseishi)* attained a commanding stature in academia in the 1980s, and cross-pollinated with "family history" to generate critical questions. A decade later, "gender history" (*jendāshi*) further expanded the scope of inquiry despite the conceptual challenge posed by the foreign term, "gender" (*jendā*), for which there is no Japanese-language equivalent.[2] The English-language scholarship on medieval women, family, and gender is far from copious, but hardly isolated. It arose in conversation with women's and gender studies that swept through North American and European academia, and has promoted interdisciplinary and cross-cultural methods since the 1980s.[3]

The multi-year intensive collaboration of Japanese and North American scholars in the 1980s and 1990s has been strategically significant. Organized by Wakita Haruko, "The Gender and Culture Project," which included Japanese and foreign participants, convened numerous workshops and published several essay collections, including *Jendā no Nihonshi* ("Gendered History of Japan," 1994) and *Women and Class in Japanese History* (1999).[4] The latter was the first English-language publication in Japanese women's history to devote the majority of its space to premodern topics.[5]

Similar major collaboration was taking place in Buddhist studies. Beginning in 1988, Ōsumi Kazuo and Nishiguchi Junko, editors of the seminal four-volume essay collection, *Shirīzu josei to bukkyō* ("Series, Women and Buddhism"), collaborated with Barbara Ruch, the organizer of the "International Workshop on Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan." In 2002, Ruch completed *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, a monumental collection featuring a balanced mix of Japanese and Western scholars.[6]

In one particularly innovative project, Japanese scholars sought to liberate Japanese women's history from purely parochial concerns and place it in an explicitly comparative framework. They translated into Japanese Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot's *L'histoire des femmes en Occident* ("History of Women in the West" (originally published in French in 1990–1991). The translation was published in stages between 1994 and 2000 as *Onna no rekishi* ("History of Women").[7]

Since then, more than eighty scholars have engaged with questions generated by *L'histoire*, and produced a six-volume essay collection titled *Onna to otoko no jikū: Nihon joseishi saikō* ("Time Space of Gender: Redefining Japanese Women's History"). Volumes 2 and 3 deal with the medieval period. A comprehensive timeline of Japanese gender history, with notations for keywords and key characters, appeared as a separate volume. Yet another title, *Rekishi no naka no jendā* ("Gender in History"), assembled additional thoughts inspired by *L'histoire*, focusing especially on female literacy, sexuality, the body, spirituality, and pollution.[8]

Another recent trend in Japanese women's history seeks connections with the geopolitical space of Asia. "Gender in Asian History: Women, Family and Inheritance," a special issue of *The International Journal of Asian Studies* published in 2006, for example, features two articles on gender in medieval Japan.[9] Unquestionably, the broad sweep of international women's and gender studies has interacted with and mutually enriched the study of Japanese women's history. But, it was the early and mid-twentieth century historians who laid down its solid scholarly foundation.

Early twentieth-century scholarship on family and women

In the early 1900s, decades before "women's studies" emerged, scholars in Japan were already building what would become a rock-solid foundation for the historical study of women. Women and family were viable subjects of historical investigation amidst the rapid pulse of modernity that marked the new age of global competition in the Meiji period (1868–1912). For many, the past history of women was a testimonial to the high level of Japanese civilization, and Meiji intellectuals eagerly wrote about women in Japan's antiquity. Sudō Motoma, in his 1901 *Nihon joshi* ("Women's History in Japan") and 1905 *Buke jidai ni okeru joken no hogo* ("Guarding Women's Rights in the Age of Warriors") focused first on the spiritual authority of the Sun Goddess. He then discussed the political power of Hōjō Masako, the wife of the first shogun, and women's property rights as specified in the laws of the Kamakura warrior government (1183–1333), which confirmed many customary rights of women—for example, to hold property independently and to adopt their own children for transmitting those rights.[10]

In 1905, Miura Hiroyuki, a legal historian, wrote *Oyako kankei o chūshin to shite no kazoku seido* ("Family System Centered around the Relationship between Parents and Children"), which examined the law codes pertaining to households and kinship relations from classical through early modern times. As in Sudō's work, the emphasis rested on Kamakura law codes (comp. 1232) that granted equal authority to mother and father vis-à-vis children. To Miura, the overall fairness of the laws and the associated judicial system assured that "the Japanese need not lament that they lack the essential capacity to be governed by modern laws."[11] The strong legal position women enjoyed in the Kamakura period (1183–1333) became the subject of his subsequent article, "Joseishijō no ōgon jidai" ("The Golden Period in Women's History").[12]

Although a multitude of scholars have studied and written about the Kamakura codes and justice system since then, Miura's reading of the laws has met little dispute and only refinement. In 1932, for example, Okada Akio expanded on the previous findings by detailing the lifetime-only inheritance provisions that began to reshape the property rights of women by limiting their ability to alienate to their heirs. Western scholars also followed, leading to publications by Joyce Ackroyd in 1959 and, in 1989, by Jeffrey P. Mass, who emphasized the fairness and rational nature of the law and justice, and myself, focusing on the laws' relationship to women's rights and meaning of marriage in warrior society.[13]

A special issue of a journal, *Rekishi kyōiku* ("Historical Education"), published in 1937 by the Association for the Research on Historical Education (Rekishi kyōiku kenkyūkai), illuminates a

strong interest in Japanese women's history. The issue was named *Joseishi kenkyū* ("Study of Women's History") and contains a number of remarkably forward-looking essays, including Nishioka Toranosuke on the position of women in agriculture in classical Japan, Endō Motoo on women's salvation in Buddhism, Nakamura Naokatsu on women in medieval warrior society, and Nakagawa Zennosuke on marriage history from the perspective of women's history.[14]

These were authors who had been exploring women's history alongside other topics for some time. Nishioka Toranosuke, for example, was best known for his work on the estate (*shōen*) system, but was also called a historian of "the masses (*minshū*)." He focused especially on people's lifestyles (*seikatsu*) and culture, which he believed to have had an impact on the course of Japanese history. In this spirit of exploring the cultural power of non-elites, he began writing articles in the 1920s about women-related topics, such as wet nurses, women's education, political roles, reading and writing Chinese, political marriages, and even the relationship between women and the sound of crickets. He later compiled these writings into a book titled *Nihon joseishi kō* ("Thoughts on Japanese Women's History"). Relying on sources that range from tales and diaries to documents and laws, the book introduces the full panoply of topics all of which recognize women's energy instead of passivity.[15]

These early twentieth-century authors, despite their tremendous contributions, are not considered the founders of Japan's "women's history." Instead, the recognition goes to either Inoue Kiyoshi (1913–2001) or Takamure Itsue (1894–1964). Before describing their scholarship, we first need to understand some key concepts that have dominated their scholarship and the works of others who followed in their footsteps.

Living in modern *ie* society and writing on medieval *ie*

"Japan's women's history began with the search for the origin of *ie*, that is, patrilineality and patriarchy (*kafuchōsei*), which has brought so much suffering to modern women," commented Nomura Ikuyo.[16] *Ie* (house or household), a concept that has framed much Japanese scholarship on family, women, and gender, is a historical term found in medieval sources but its historiographical significance derives from its modern usage. "*Ie*" is the first character in the term "*kazoku*," or "family," which emerged in a civil code of Meiji Japan, promulgated in 1896. The code granted the household head, the eldest male, the exclusive rights and authority to oversee the *ie*'s operation and its members' affairs, including marriage, residence, inheritance and so on. Marriage for a woman meant the loss of legal rights to the *ie*, including parental rights pertaining to her biological child.[17]

Although the postwar constitution replaced the Meiji Code, it kept many nineteenth-century clauses in effect, still disadvantaging women's legal position within the household and influencing the research purposes of historians.[18] Scholars continue to see *ie* as a structure that shaped every aspect of the household, including economy, profession, marriage, education, not to mention personal affairs.

Anatomy of premodern "family": *ie* and patriarchy

Historians describe the medieval *ie* as a co-residential, nuclear or stem family, organized around a heterosexual couple, with the goal of promoting its collective assets and its socially recognized profession (*kagyō*), for example, "*ie* of warriors (*tsuwamono*)," "*ie* of [provisioning] clothes," "*ie* of kickball (*kemari*)," and "*ie* of poetry." *Ie* headship (*kachō*), imbued with authority over others, descended patrilineally from the father to the main son (*chakushi*), along with material assets and ritual and symbolic power.[19]

Ie, to historians, was also an abstract embodiment of *kafuchōsei*, or patriarchy. Expressed in the oft-used phrase, "the formation of the *ie*" (*ie no seiritsu*), *ie* was seen as an ontologically verifiable and datable phenomenon in the development of patriarchy, which marked an important moment on the Marxian teleological axis of evolution. The term "*ie*" stood both for the social reality and a theoretical construct in historiographical ruminations. Too often the two were conflated and created confusion as to *ie*'s precise meaning and historical significance.[20]

A 1992 publication of *Ie to kafuchōsei* ("*Ie* and Patriarchy") by the Society for Comparative Family History (Hikaku kazoku shigakukai) illustrates the confusion and frustration surrounding the concept of *ie* and patriarchy. While expressing the need to determine when and how *ie* (written with scare quotes) evolved in relationship to the aristocratic accumulation of private estates and the economic instability of peasants, the medieval historian Nagahara Keiji ultimately questions if the formation of *ie* in fact signaled the formation of "patriarchy," a concept which to him also lacks clarity in meaning.[21] As for women, Nagahara offers: "It is usually considered that patriarchy makes women into persons with 'no rights and no abilities' and subjugates them totally, but we cannot presume that the kind of relationship the Meiji Civil Code prescribed was always a [historical] reality."[22] Gomi Fumihiko likewise questions if "*kafuchōsei* was an effective concept in Japan's medieval age" and focuses on two related questions: whether or not the "patriarchal family" (*kafuchōsei kazoku*) was "formed" and what was meant by "control" (*shihai*).[23] A decade later, the state of confusion prompted the British social anthropologist Jack Goody (who was not a Japan specialist), to remark: "It is difficult to see what is meant by this often-used, omnibus term, which obscures as much as it illuminates. One has to look at the question class by class, sector by sector, rural or urban, settled or nomadic."[24]

Both before and after the publication of *Ie to kafuchōsei*, dozens of articles and books tackled various questions related to *ie* and patriarchy, by identifying, refining, and expanding the meaning of the "omnibus" term. Discussions of patriarchy seem to have tapered off in the twenty-first century, while *ie* continues to appear as a structural framework within which family members defined rights and negotiated their positions.

The forerunners of women's history: Inoue Kiyoshi and Takamure Itsue

Inoue Kiyoshi (1913–2001) was committed to examining the history of ordinary people (*minshū*), the discriminated-against, and the disadvantaged, from a Marxian perspective. Inoue began to study women's history in the 1930s, and published his seminal work, *Nihon joseishi* ("Japanese Women's History") in 1948, in the postwar atmosphere of freedom of expression.[25] It covers the entire history of Japan, from ancient through modern times, and finds the start of a class system in the spread of agriculture and the ensuing accumulation of wealth and property by a few.

The downfall of women's position, Inoue concluded, began once the chieftains, as patriarchs, began controlling the rest of the people. Heian-period aristocratic women were cherished only as a reproductive tool for the nobility. As the feudal system evolved, warrior-class women were treated like domestic sexual slaves under the autocratic rule of men. The *sengoku*-period stripped women of any recognizable human character. Commoner class women were similarly affected. In the Meiji period, *tennōsei*, or "emperor-ism," fused the feudalistic family system with landlordism and capitalism, and fostered debates over the equal rights of women and their liberation. Writing in postwar Japan, Inoue called the constitutionally guaranteed equal rights of women and men a "sham," since economic reality continued to foster disparities between men and women. He predicted the total liberation of women only when a classless society was achieved.

Inoue's book became a bestseller and has been reprinted dozens of times, with some revision in 1953 and 1967. Of its more than three hundred pages, the book devotes only twenty-four to

the medieval period. In those few pages, Inoue described the early medieval period as a time of immature feudalism, which still granted women property rights through inheritance. But as feudalism matured, the unitary transmission of family property barred daughters from the inheritance pool, and turned women into a family's chattel.

The basic historical sources Inoue used are little different from those mined by the earlier authors, such as Miura Hiroyuki and Okada Akio. But Inoue's interpretation, guided by a Marxian teleological theory and revolutionary aspirations, differed in its emphasis on the negative side of power relations, limits placed on women's authority, and their victimization. Today, most Japanese historians have some difficulty with Inoue's writings, not because of its Marxism per se but because of its exclusive focus on class struggle as the entire cause of women's changing positions. As Tabata Yasuko comments in 1998, other factors, such as the marital residential locations, marriage relationships, and other cultural aspects also need to be considered.[26] This remark suggests the influence of Takamure Itsue, indisputably one of the most eminent historians of the century, to whom we now turn.

Takamure Itsue (1894–1964) lived in a political atmosphere that was loud and lively. On the one hand, the government ideology of *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother-ism) extolled women's virtues and their potential to serve the home and the country as wife and mother. On the other hand, the feminist movement, symbolized by the publication of "Blue Stockings" by Hiratsuka Raichō (1886–1971) promoted an intense debate over motherhood, sexuality, marriage, and so on. As Takamure's writing career began, women activists were raising consciousness, forcefully demanding rights and suffrage in public spaces, and living in accordance with their sexual ideals.

Initially a poet and activist, Takamure wanted to transform women's history from a story of female experiences into a major historical axis around which economic and political institutions evolved. She isolated herself in her famous "House in the Forest" (*mori no ie*) in 1931 in order to narrate "nothing but the truth." It is said she wrote "for ten hours every day for ten years" while poring over historical sources.[27] During that time, she published *Dai Nippon josei jinmei jisho* ("Biographical Dictionary of Women in Greater Japan") in 1936, *Bokeisei no kenkyū* ("Study of Matrilineal Descent System") in 1938, and *Josei nisenroppyakunen shi* ("2600 Years of Women's History") in 1940.[28] *Bokeisei no kenkyū*, the work that "challenged the entire premise of Japanese society," according to her own words, was met with a silent dismissal by mainstream academia, which unquestioningly upheld the presumed reality of patrilineal descent from time immemorial.[29] In 1953, she added to her collection her magnum opus, *Shōseikon no kenkyū* ("Study of the Invite-the-groom Marriage"). Again, academia paid only slightly more attention than it had done to the earlier work. Two brief reviews appeared in two newspapers. But it is precisely this book that historians—especially medieval historians—consider pioneering and the most influential in setting the future direction of Japanese women's history.[30]

In these and other works, Takamure followed closely the stage theory of transformation outlined in Frederick Engel's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* and incorporated the conceptual vocabulary introduced by Lewis Morgan, such as consanguine marriage. She argued that Japanese society evolved in stages from a more female-centered to a more male-dominant civilization. The kinship system moved from a communal to a family-based organization. Lineage evolved from matrilineal to patrilineal descent. Marriage, which was matrilocal (or uxorilocal) changed to patrilocal (or virilocal). And women's sexual freedom transformed to sexual slavery. This is a simplified summary and excludes various intermediate stages, such as the progression in marriage form from (1) visiting marriage in which a man visits the woman (*tsuma-doikon*); (2) marriage in which a woman's native family takes in the groom (*mukotorikon*); to (3) marriage which only temporarily or superficially sets up an arrangement to have the man move

into the woman's residence (*gisei mukotorikon*); and finally (4) marriage that removes the woman from her natal home to the man's residence (*yometorikon*). Takamure fit Engel's theory, which connected women's status to patterns of marriage, property rights, and lineage to Japanese history. She found the fourteenth century to be the dividing point at which women's position began to crumble under the shackles of patriarchal authority.[31]

In some of her writings, Takamure employed the vocabulary used in the standard periodization scheme, such as "medieval" (*chūsei*), which began with the establishment of the Kamakura warrior government and the birth of "feudalism" at the end of the twelfth century.[32] But for Takamure, the change in warrior rule per se was insignificant compared to what was happening in marriage arrangements. For her, the major divide occurred in the fourteenth century when the vocabulary of "*yometori*," or "take-the-bride" marriage, began to appear in historical sources, a clear indication that a patriarchal system was becoming institutionalized. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when women still held rights to property, presaged the slow devolution of female rights. As the woman's person and body were taken away from her natal community or family in the "take-the-bride" marriage, women moved toward subjugation under the absolute patriarchal control of the husband's *ie*.[33]

Although initially ignored, Takamure's publications have had an enormous influence on subsequent scholarship. In the US, William McCullough, a scholar of Heian literature, who sought to find ways to make sense out of Heian texts "in which references to marriage practices pose serious problems of interpretation," agreed with Takamure in that he found no virilocal (or patrilocal) marriage in the twelfth century. In the thirteenth century, however, the marital residence came to be inherited along the patrilineal line, a change from the previous transmission of the residence along the matrilineal line.[34] Peter Nickerson followed McCullough's lead and discussed the unusual Heian combination of the customary patterns of patrilineal descent and matrilocal marital residency. In examining a diary written by Hino Meishi in the mid-fourteenth century, I found that Meishi's love relationship and marriage with Saionji Kinmune, at least, fit the pattern Takamure described remarkably well.[35]

Later premodern historians built on Takamure's accomplishments, but with occasional skepticism toward certain aspects of her observations and interpretations. For example, Sekiguchi Hiroko points out that *mukotori* ("take-the-son-in-law"), in which the man moves into the woman's house was, after all, a kind of patriarchal form of marriage because it was the woman's father who wielded authority over the marriage decision. Some raised questions regarding the position of secondary wives, whom Takamure did not discuss, in the overwhelmingly polygamous condition of Heian aristocrats. As for property ownership, women's possession of property did not mean superiority to men in economic security, although there was no question that women had it better in periods with property than later (post-fourteenth-century), times. Some wondered about the degree to which women could be independent in property management: as long as the estate management was subject to the power of the central authorities or military force, what authority could women yield? Scholars also questioned the correlation between the timing of the development of the institution of *ie* and that of patrilocal marriage.[36]

A more serious charge came from Kurihara Hiromu in his 1994 book. By carefully examining the historical sources Takamure had analyzed, Kurihara came to the conclusion that she had misinterpreted certain sources. Moreover, Kurihara declared, she also purposefully manipulated interpretations in order to substantiate her theory that archaic Japan was matrilineal.[37]

In response to Kurihara's charges, several scholars, including Nishino Yukiko, pointed to problems with Kurihara's understanding of Takamure's "temporary matrilocal" marriage and the question of who provided the temporary abode, for example. Charges of a different nature came from scholars of modern Japan, such as Nishikawa Yūko and Ueno Chizuko. They criticized Takamure

for having treated Japan and all women as one nationalistic whole and charged that her work served to support the 1930s nationalist imperialist ideology.[38]

Regardless of her errors and sins, the 1930s and 1940s saw the rise of this seminal independent female historian-researcher amid the vast terrain of the established male historians. Structuring her argument around the stage theory delineated by Engels, Takamure proposed an entirely revolutionary way to periodize Japanese history and, while giving primacy to the location of marriage as a definitive analytical framework, she confronted the hitherto unquestioned view that Japanese society was always governed by a patrilineal principle.

Medieval historians writing in postwar times generally framed historical questions from a Marxist perspective, with different degrees of theoretical commitment to Marxian vocabulary and analytical methods. In studying women, questions that fit a Marxist analysis, such as work, production, productivity, labor, and economic rights, tended to overshadow questions about sexuality and human reproduction. But Takamure planted the new possibilities for considering women's lives on a totally different plane. The historiographical foundation for the study of family, women, and gender in Japanese scholarship was laid out long before the rise of the second feminist movement in academia in the 1970s.

Gaining legitimation in Japanese scholarship

Women's history as a recognizable academic field began with an underlying goal of overcoming what was considered to be centuries of victimization of women. Its increasing significance prompted the Historical Science Council (Rekishi kagaku kyōgikai), a mainstream organization, to name the promotion of women's history as one of its larger goals in 1972. Every March issue of the Council's journal, *Rekishi hyōron*, would henceforth be dedicated to women's history. The 1970s saw intense debates over the meaning of "women's history" in relationship to various types of oppression, including those caused by capitalism, patriarchy, and sexual differences, and to the connection between women's liberation and class struggle.[39]

Often self-consciously harking back to the paradigm introduced by Takamure Itsue, historians intensified efforts in the 1980s by networking and publishing. This was also a time of what Kuroda Hiroko describes as "social/women's history" (*shakaishiteki joseishi*), a confluence of two strains—feminism and a society-focused perspective influenced by the mutated Marxist methods, represented most clearly in the works of Amino Yoshihiko.[40]

Beginning in 1982, the Women's History Research Collective (Joseishi sōgō kenkyūkai), under the leadership of Wakita Haruko published the truly seminal five-volume *Nihon joseishi* ("Japanese Women's History"), followed by *Bosei o tou: Rekishiteki hensen* ("Questioning Motherhood: Historical Transformations," 1985), and *Nihon josei seikatsushi* ("Japanese Women's Everyday Life History," 1990).[41] The second collection examines how women and men, and political and military authorities, as well as Buddhist teachings, regarded the oft-naturalized notion of "motherhood." The last collection was called a sister series to the 1982 volumes and examined women's lives from the perspective of their actual activities and material life, with less emphasis on the structure within which women lived, moving away from discussions of property and lineage. The medieval chapters feature examinations of women's salvation; life stages from birth, sexuality, childbirth, widowhood, and death in the court and city; wives and female attendants in the shogunal court and other warrior houses; and more.[42]

These works developed in association with a parallel trend that incorporated visual materials, such as scrolls, and successfully generated imaginative questions dealing with the body, sexuality, and subjectivity. Kuroda Hideo's *Sugata to shigusa no chūseishi: Ezu to emaki no fūkei kara* ("Medieval History of Figures and Gestures: Seen through Maps and Scrolls") and Hotate Michihisa's,

Chūsei no ai to jūzoku: Emaki no naka no nikutai ("Medieval Love and Subjugation: the Body and Flesh in Scrolls") exemplify this development. The use of images such as "Shokunin uta awase" ("Contest of Poetry on the Theme of Artisans") also enabled an analysis of the imagined work of female and male artisans and professionals.[43]

By the 1990s, the field of medieval history was bursting with popularity in Japan, both in academia and among the reading public. Women's history, the new field, continued to flourish. In 1992, a three-volume set on Japanese women's history (*Nihon josei no rekishi*) was packaged into a popular Pocket Book series, each covering the entire history of the country but focusing thematically on "sex, love, and family," "women's work," and "culture and thoughts." 1996 saw the publication of *Onna to otoko no jikū*, mentioned earlier. In addition to the issues of property rights and roles within the *ie*, the medieval volumes emphasized interdisciplinary work inspired by religion, art history, and performance art, such as the medieval image of the Sun Goddess, Blood Bowl Sutra belief, Christianity and folk beliefs, women-specific hells, women's language, and itinerant women. A ten-volume collection, *Nihon joseishi ronshū* ("Collected Essays on Japanese Women's History"), covering various themes, such as politics, labor, *ie*, religion, education, and athletics, bore fruit in 1997, by the effort of the Research Collective for Women's History (Sōgō joseishi kenkyūkai).[44]

Outside the collectives, Japanese scholars also turned their energy toward individual titles with attractive themes. These included a work on the lives of children and the aged, wet nurses, and men practicing male-male sex.[45] The hardening notion of pollution, which loomed large in the structure of medieval society and affected women's social position, received an in-depth examination by Narikiyo Hirokazu while the related issues of motherhood, blood sutra belief, birth-giving, and nursing became the focus of Katō Mieko's work.[46]

This trend generated not only a large output of scholarly works in a variety of subjects but also saw new noteworthy interpretations that expanded and questioned Takamure's perspective in important ways. By adopting an intersectional approach that focused on commoner women, Nagahara Keiji concluded women's status was in fact rising in late medieval times, in contrast to Takamure's assessment, which had been based mostly on aristocratic sources.[47] Another noteworthy reinterpretation of Takamure's view came from Wakita Haruko, the doyen of women's history. By examining warrior and aristocratic sources, Wakita remarkably argued that the *ie* had a positive effect on women; the shift from matrilocal to patrilocal marriage and the emergence of *ie* meant a new sense of security for women that the previous visiting marriage system lacked. Wakita sees *ie* as a monogamous economic unit that demanded management by both the wife and the husband. The wife, especially as the mother of the heir, held authority over production and reproduction pertaining to the *ie*. The structure of *ie*, in other words, subjugated both the husband and the wife. The security of the marital relationship demanded that the wife be the house administrator, a structure that assured more gender symmetry in power than before.[48]

One area of inquiry that had received scant attention was late medieval aristocratic families. The new thorough examination of families such as the Ichijō and Sanjōnishi by Gotō Michiko reveals the increased authority of the *tsuma* (wife), which paralleled the consolidation of patrilineal descent and ancestral veneration in the declining economic, but not cultural, condition of late medieval times. Echoing Wakita's interpretation, Gotō explains that, previously, in times of dual lineage interest, temples had performed ceremonies for ancestral veneration at the temple separately for the wife's and husband's lineages. The new emphasis on a single patrilineal interest in a given family allowed a private space of worship to be set up within the house. This new arrangement authorized the *tsuma* to govern the home-based memorial service, though it was for her husband's parents instead of her natal family members. This was an ironic situation that moved "the outer" space into "the domestic" sphere, and allocated new authority to the *tsuma*. Gotō's

work emphasizes the notion of "*ie no tsuma*," or "house-wife," the matriarch of the house, akin to Japan's modern term, *shufu*. The medieval version of "house-wife" was more *tsuma* (caretaker) of the *ie*, than of the husband. The *tsuma*, together with the male household head (*kachō*), co-administered the house business, including the servants' tasks, children's education, and communication with temples. In time, the diminished budget also reduced the practical authority of *tsuma*.[49]

Another new area challenged the previous study of warriors, which typically considered women as wives, mothers, and daughters. A seminal collection of essays appeared in 2004 under the title, *Sensō, bōryoku to josei 1: Ikusa no naka no onnnatachi* ("War, Violence, and Women 1: Women in War"). Edited by Nishimura Hiroko, the featured topics include women's participation in early and late medieval wars, observations made by Christians, female hostages in Hideyoshi's Korean invasions, women's war avoidance strategies, women's promotion of peace, violence by *jitō* (land stewards) in villages, and women's resistance to and denial of violence. Altogether, the volume highlights the complexity of the relationships among war, violence, and gender: women defended homes, supported battle efforts from behind the scenes, and worked in camps as laborers and even fighters.[50]

In Japan and the West, scholars have searched eagerly for signs of female warriors in various sources, including tales, chronicles, diaries, images, and artifacts. The case of female riders, or *nyoki*, serves to illustrate the new cautionary attitude toward this popular concern and hasty conclusions.

Ebisawa Miki, who, along with Fujiki Hisashi, had earlier interpreted the term *nyoki* to mean "female cavalry for combat," reinvestigated the etymology of the term and the context in which it appears more than eighty times in various ancient and medieval sources. She concluded that usage before the fourteenth century nearly exclusively related to purification and other ceremonial processions. In late medieval Japan, the term appears less frequently, but in the context of battles, it is used to denigrate and feminize an enemy force, or is associated with the mythical Empress Jingū, who began to be represented as an armored warrior after the twelfth century.[51]

Of course, these rhetorical representations do not necessarily deny the possibility that real female warriors or riders existed. Tabata Yasuko's voluminous study of medieval women, for instance, points to recorded cases of female combatants, such as Ichikawa no Tsubone, who, in the late sixteenth century, defended the home region by donning armor and commanding her troops, who were female. But the term "*nyoki*" itself only means "a rider who is female," and not "female warrior." Women riding horses may have been ritual specialists or packhorse laborers on the battlefields. The term alone does not indicate there were female troops.[52]

Interdisciplinary English-language scholarship on women and gender

The 1980s and 1990s were also a time in which English-language works on women and gender, situated at the intersection of literature and religion, flourished, represented by Bernard Faure, Rajyashree Pandey, Lori Meeks, Keller Kimbrough and many others.[53] Female entertainers, their sexuality and spirituality also received welcome attention in Western-language works of authors such as Jacqueline Pigeot, Janet Goodwin, Michel Marra, and Terry Kawashima.[54]

The richness of early medieval sources offered by female aristocrats has afforded close interpretations of women's court service, literary activities, and life patterns. For the thirteenth century, Christina Laffin introduces the life of the nun Abutsu (1222–1283), known for "The Nursemaid's Letter" (*Menoto no fumi*) and "The Diary of the Sixteenth-Night Moon" (*Izayoi nikki*) among others, who traveled to Kamakura to defend the property rights of her son. The same period produced *Towazugatari* (*The Confessions of Lady Nijō*), a personal account of the

author's service as a lady-in-waiting and her subsequent travels, available in Karen Brazell's translation. Margaret H. Childs and I have both interpreted *Confessions*, focusing on her experience of coercive sex, a unique personal voice among aristocrats' writings.[55] Waiting for analysis are the last extant medieval woman's diary, *Takemukigaki* ("Writing from a Room Facing the Bamboo") a mid-fourteenth century work by Hino Meishi (?–1358), and the remarkable official log of the emperor's daily movement, *Oyudono no ue no nikki* ("Journal from the Room Adjoining the Bath"), kept by the court's ladies-in-waiting from 1477 to 1828.[56]

Works that cross the divide between literature and history also include Steven D. Carter's *Householders: The Reizei Family in Japanese History*, which offers a multi-generational study of an aristocratic family. His translation of Kaneyoshi's poem, "Awake in the night" (*Sayo no nezame*, *c*.1469–1486) in *Regent Redux* also illuminates a particular medieval construction of women in powerful positions: "this land of Japan is … a place that should be governed by women." Meant for Hino Tomiko, the wife of Ashikaga Yoshimasa, the poem cites the precedents of Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess), Empress Jingū, and Hōjō Masako and commends, "Therefore, if a wise person (woman) should appear, she should rule the nation."[57]

Gender history

Without abandoning the women-centered approach, scholars in the fields of women's studies (*joseigaku*) began incorporating some of the language, methods, and perspectives of gender studies in the 1990s. The transition was, however, neither quick nor simple. The historiographical appendix to *Women and Class in Japanese History* (1999) explains the process. The book was based on a conference titled "Male and Female Role Sharing," held with the hope to promote a gendered approach by explicitly departing from the ghettoization of "women's history." As the book's title indicates, the initial hope to include more gendered perspectives ultimately fell short.[58] In other books as well, the use of "gender" was often more superficial than substantive, and the focus on women continued without attention to gendered methods or implications.

As in the field of American history, Japanese women's history often simply "substituted gender for women in their titles" without necessarily retooling their interpretive approaches to accommodate new questions regarding relational dynamic of women and men, men as a gendered subject, or existing gender as a constructed category. A debate ensued as to the value and validity of gender history, often embroiled in the method's relationship to the Marxian-based notion of release from discrimination, and a question regarding the virtue of linear progression from women's history to gender history.[59]

Nonetheless, books with the word "*jendā*" in the title began to fill bookstores in the new century. For example, *Jendā to josei* ("Gender and Women"), compiled by the Society for Comparative Family History, offers several articles on medieval Japan, along with theoretical reflections on "what is 'women' in women's history?" by Ogino Miho.[60] *Esunishitī, jendā kara miru Nihon no rekishi* ("Japanese History Viewed from Ethnicity and Gender"), published in 2002, for example, contains a delightful article by Sakai Kimi, which offers a gendered analysis of social and political implications embedded in medieval dreams, dreamt by women and men, and reinterpreted by people who hear about them.[61]

The year 2014 saw the publication of a grand narrative of Japanese history, *Jendāshi* ("Gender History"). It sought to "recapture the objects of investigation previously taken by women's history, now from the perspective of gender, that is, socially and culturally shaped sexual differences." It also sought to "provide a narrative that unites the entire history of Japan, along with a new periodization scheme that replaces the traditional divisions based on political shifts." The book offers a detailed and valuable comparison of the roles played by men and women, observing

that the patriarch's wife was responsible for administering rituals, ceremonies, food, and so on; cutting the fish was gendered male while cooking it in a pot was gendered female; childcare by men typically began after the child had hair on the head while women took care of the nursing-age infants. In this way, the chapters seek to describe both the male and female work patterns in comparable topics, and reveals a multi-dimensional view of medieval society. It also highlights measures, such as adoption of a male child and granting of the headship to the widow, which were intended to fulfill the goal of *ie*, that is, its own survival and continuity. The chapters successfully offer insightful reflections of the sources carefully excavated in previous scholarship. Nevertheless, they also uphold the established linguistic authority of *ie*, as seen in section titles: "The formation (*seiritsu*) of '*ie*' and gender," and "The establishment (*kakuritsu*) of '*ie*' and gender." The titles suggest the deeply embedded analytical framework of "*ie*," which threatens to confine the meaning of gendered relationships within the abstract space associated with its predetermined power.[62]

Conclusion

I have touched on only a fraction of the works that deserve to be mentioned. The field of women's and gender studies has grown through cross- and interdisciplinary efforts that have employed a wide array of sources in search of new questions and answers. Areas that have been classified as religion, literature, art history, and performance arts, for example, have provided portals to dimensions of society, human connections, and consciousness that often were closed to the scrutiny of scholars confined to the world of historical documents. Since the 1980s, in Japan, highly organized collaborative efforts, which were in turn founded on decades of solid research, bore rich fruit and continue to energize ever more rigorous collective inquiries into new and old questions. Fueling these scholarly pursuits, in part, is the realistic and lived sense of contemporary inequity that is manifested in, for example, the concept of "*ie*" as exemplified in current law. English-language scholars have benefitted from the deep pool of Japanese scholarship, while carving out their particular methods of investigation and modes of inquiry that often sought to counter the West-centric constructions of sex and gender that pervaded the academia.

Over the decades, medieval historical studies in general have moved away from the Marxian teleological interpretive framework, to adopt a method that examines historical terms with more rigor and fewer built-in assumptions. This trend is particularly evident in the study of family, women, and gender, fields prone to interpretation through the lens of normalized constructed categories of modern society. Reinterpretation of the term *nyoki* (female riders), described above, is a pertinent example that has corrected the initial reading by shedding expectations about women's roles.[63] A greater sensitivity to the changing meanings of terms across contexts has eliminated problems of hasty misinterpretation of terms such as "*sokushi*," which in early modern times meant "son," but included daughters in early medieval writings. English-language historians have managed the issue of the absence of a gender in Japanese pronouns and the question of how to translate terms such as "person (*mono* or *hito*)," without excluding women as referents.

As the field increases in sophistication in interpreting and scrutinizing sources, there is a pressing need for translated documentary sources, perhaps an English-language version of the seminal anthology, *Shiryō ni miru Nihon josei no ayumi* ("Steps Taken by the Japanese Women Seen through Historical Sources"). In addition, the study of men as gendered subjects and participants in historical transformations is sorely lacking in both Japanese- and English-language scholarship. From diaries and tales to laws and letters, medieval sources, in fact, offer a multitude of opportunities to historicize men as gendered figures.[64] Without understanding men's action and concerns from a gendered perspective, we cannot fully comprehend Japan's medieval society.

Notes

1 Nagashima Atsuko, *Bakuhansei shakai no jendā kōzō*, 18.

2 To illustrate, the public misunderstood "gender" in "gender-free spaces," proposed by the government, to mean a thing to be removed as with "barrier" in "barrier-free spaces," and opposed it because "gender-free" would destroy "Japan's natural sexual and biological male-female distinctions" in, for instance, public toilets. Itō Kimio, *"Danjo kyōdō sankaku" ga toikakeru mono: Gendai Nihon shakai to jendā porithikkusu*, 170–199. Tachi Kaoru, "Jendā gainen no kentō," traces the use of "gender" from its inception to the late 1990s.

3 Hitomi Tonomura, "Women and Sexuality in Premodern Japan" and "Gender Relations in the Age of Violence" offer a quick overview.

4 Wakita's energetic effort to introduce Japanese women's history in English began with "Marriage and Property in Premodern Japan from the Perspective of Women's History," with Suzanne Gay, published in 1984. Wakita Haruko and S.B. Hanley, *Jendā no Nihonshi*; Hitomi Tonomura et al., *Women and Class in Japanese History*.

5 It contains thirteen chapters by Japanese and four by North American scholars. Also see another two-volume English-language set, edited by Wakita Haruko et al., entitled *Gender and Japanese History*, also published in 1999. Wakita also organized the project to compile a series of comprehensive bibliographies of women-related titles in all disciplines and fields. Joseishi sōgō kenkyūkai, *Nihon joseishi kenkyū bunken mokuroku*. Vol. 1 was published in 1983. Volumes III, IV, and V (covering 1987–1991, 1992–1996, and 1997–2002 respectively) contain a section on English-language titles.

6 Ōsumi Kazuo and Nishiguchi Junko, *Shirīzu josei to bukkyō*. The four volumes' titles are: *Ama to amadera*, *Sukui to oshie*, *Shinkō to kuyō*, and *Miko to megami*. Barbara Ruch, *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*. See also Rajyashree Pandey's thoughtful review article, "Review: Medieval Experience, Modern Visions: Women in Buddhism." Ruch had established herself as a scholar who explored, against the historiographical grain, the underside of history, both in class and gender terms, for example, in "The Other Side of Culture in Medieval Japan."

7 Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot, *Histoire des Femmes en Occident*. Sugimura Kazuko and Shiga Ryōichi, trans., *Onna no rekishi*.

8 *Onna to otoko no jikū: Nihon joseishi saikō*, edited by Kōno Nobuko, Tsurumi Kazuko and others. *Nenpyō: Onna to otoko no Nihonshi*, Onna to otoko no jikū hensan iinkai, comp. Amino Yoshihiko et al., *Rekishi no naka no jendā*.

9 Noriko Kurushima, "Marriage and Female Inheritance in Medieval Japan"; and Michiko Goto, "The Lives and Roles of Women of Various Classes in the *Ie* of Late Medieval Japan." Kurushima also published "Marriage and *Ie* in Late Medieval Japan," in a multi-language (Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and English) conference volume, titled *Joseishi, jendāshi kara miru higashi Ajia no rekishizō*.

10 Sudō Motoma, *Nihon joshi*, and *Buke jidai ni okeru joken no hogo*. Nineteenth-century Western visitors to Japan also wrote about Japanese women. The best known is Alice Mabel Bacon's eminently upbeat portrait, *Japanese Girls and Women*, 1891.

11 Miura Hiroyuki, *Hōseishi no kenkyū*, 544–604. He added, "despite the autocratic laws of the recent Tokugawa period (1600–1868)" *Hōseishi*, 1171. For all scholars, comparison with the West served to boost the self-confidence of Japanese society. Shimomura Miyokichi stated:

> Whether in the East or the West, if we compare the social status of men and women in ancient times, women were always placed below men, although to different degrees. In Greece, there were scholars who would assert that women's place was only slightly above that of slaves. But in our country, not only were women placed equal to men, but in some cases women held more force than did men.
>
> ("Kokushijō ni okeru josei," 2)

12 Miura Hiroyuki, "Joseishijō no ōgon jidai." This 1922 article was reprinted in his 1955 essay collection, *Nihonshi no kenkyū*, 641–658. A comprehensive list of publications on women from the late 1800s and early 1900s, including those by Miura, can be found in *Nihon joseishi kenkyū bunken mokuroku* vol. 1.

13 Okada Akio, "Chūsei buke shakai ni okeru josei no keizaiteki chii"; Joyce Ackroyd, "Women in Feudal Japan"; Jeffrey P. Mass, *Lordship and Inheritance in Early Medieval Japan: A Study of the Kamakura Sōryō System*; and Hitomi Tonomura, "Women and Inheritance in Japan's Early Warrior Society."

14 Rekishi kyōiku kenkyūkai, *Joseishi kenkyū*. Also see Endō Motoo's *Nihon josei no seikatsu to bunka*.

15 See Nishioka Toranosuke, *Shōenshi no kenkyū*, *Minshū seikatsushi kenkyū*, and *Nihon joseishi kō*. A popular general survey of family history, published two decades later, is Fukuo Takeichirō, *Nihon kazoku seidoshi gaisetsu*.
16 Nomura Ikuyo, "'10–18 seiki ie to kon'in, sōzoku' no seika to kadai," 111. The position that women's history exists today to question academia's "patriarchal essence" is repeated in various works. See the introduction to Joseishi sōgō kenkyūkai, *Nihon josei seikatsushi* 1, v.
17 *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, entry for "*kazoku*," 71–72. According to the *Joseigaku jiten*, "*kazoku*" initially included household servants. Today's meaning of the term, focused on blood relations, began only after World War II. For anthropological views, see a special issue of *Journal of Japanese Studies*, titled "Symposium on Ie Society," which includes Obayashi Taryo's "Uji Society and Ie Society from Prehistory to Medieval Times." The emphasis on *ie* emerged in Japan's ideological and political push for a rapid, Western-style modernization, coupled with the need to "preserve" a pristine Japanese cultural identity. Emiko Ochiai, "Debates over the Ie and the Stem Family: Orientalism East and West," 105–106.
18 For example, Article 772, which granted to the woman's previous husband the legal paternity of the child born within 300 days of divorce, regardless of who the biological father is. Carl F. Goodman, *The Rule of Law in Japan: A Comparative Analysis*, 133–135. The high economic growth of the 1970s and 1980s raised woes that "traditional *ie*" was breaking down and led to the revival of the *ie* ideology in the corporations, educational policies, and cultural practices. Minegishi Sumio, "Chūsei shakai no 'ie' to josei," 335–336.
19 The classical law of the household (*koryō*) prescribed who would be the primary son in relation to the primary wife. Gradually, the wife's status began to matter less, and eventually birth order also became irrelevant, as long as the line could continue. Takahashi Hideki, *Chūsei no ie to sei*, 6–8.
20 Conventionally, the "formation of *ie*" has meant the displacement by *ie* of *uji* (lineage/clan), which had organized the classical, elite society, but had split into subunits or dissolved, and ushered in a new patriarchal phase in the evolutionary track. Arguing against this notion is Takahashi Hideki, who asserts that *uji* and *ie* co-existed throughout premodern times. Takahashi, *Chūsei no ie to sei*, 9. In support of this is the pattern that medieval documents show women always using their natal family's *uji* name, never that of their husband, as signatories. Iinuma Kenji, "Joseimei kara mita chūsei no josei no shakaiteki ichi," 52–53. But in late medieval times, with the loss of independent property rights, women began to be identified by their husband's surname (*sei*). Sakata Satoshi, "Chūsei no ie to josei," 201–202.
21 Nagahara explains that in *kafuchōsei*, "we find father rights, husband rights, property rights." But more difficult is the meaning of "patriarchal authority (*kafuchōken*), which could include traditional authority deriving from the patrilineal blood connections, as well as the power and authority vested in the household head as an individual person." Nagahara and his colleagues found a potentially wide range of meanings, including a kind of control (*shihai*) or governing authority called "patriarchal style control (*kafuchōseiteki shihai*)." Discussion on the etymology of "patriarchy" ensued, involving the analysis of works by Bachofen, Morgan, Engels, and Babel, as well as ideas offered by Ishimoda Shō and Takamure Itsue. Nagahara Keiji, "Hajimeni," 6 and 1–4.
22 Nagahara, "Hajimeni," 7.
23 Gomi Fumihiko, "Chūsei no ie to kafuchōsei," 45–46.
24 Jack Goody, "Introduction to Women, Family, and Inheritance in China and Japan," 199.
25 Inoue Kiyoshi, *Nihon joseishi*.
26 See for example, Tabata Yasuko, *Nihon chūsei no shakai to josei*, 1–2.
27 Ueno Chizuko, "Takamure joseishi o dō uketsuguka: jendā to 'gensetsu no seiji' o megutte," 253.
28 Takamure Itsue, *Dai Nippon josei jinmei jisho*; *Bokeisei no kenkyū*; and *Josei nisen roppyaku nen shi*.
29 Kurihara Hiromu, *Takamure Itsue no kon'in joseishizō no kenkyū*, 3–4.
30 Takamure Itsue, *Shōseikon no kenkyū*. The reviews were by Ienaga Saburō and Nakagawa Zennosuke. Kurihara, *Takamure Itsue no kon'in joseishi zō*, 6. Modern scholars have described Takamure's life. See Patricia E. Tsurumi in her "Feminism and Anarchism in Japan: Takamure Itsue, 1894–1964"; Ronald P. Loftus, "Female Self-Writing: Takamure Itsue's 'Hi no kuni no onna no nikki'"; Nishikawa Yūko, *Mori no ie no miko Takamure Itsue*; Jeanette Taudin Chabot, "Takamure Itsue: The First Historian of Japanese Women," among others.
31 As Kurushima Noriko notes, Takamure's treatment of the period beyond the fourteenth century was less thorough than her work on the earlier period, probably because Takamure's effort was more focused on challenging the long-held notion that Japanese society was always patrilineal in descent and virilocal in marriage. Kurushima, "Marriage and Female Inheritance in Medieval Japan," 224.
32 For example, in *Josei nisen roppyaku nen shi*.

33 Takamure Itsue, *Josei no rekishi 1*, 382.
34 William McCullough, in "Japanese Marriage Institutions in the Heian Period," used uxorilocal, virilocal, and neolocal to describe the marriage patterns defined in terms of residences. He relied on Takamure's work extensively to describe aristocratic marriages in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. His article was translated into Japanese as "Heian jidai no kon'in seido" by Kurihara Hiromu in 1978 and is cited often by the Japanese scholars.
35 Peter Nickerson, "The Meaning of Matrilocality: Kinship, Property, and Politics in Mid-Heian"; Hitomi Tonomura, "Re-envisioning Women in the Post-Kamakura Age."
36 Sekiguchi Hiroko, *Nihon kodai kon'inshi no kenkyū I*, 31. Tabata Yasuko summarizes these points in her "Kaisetsu: chūsei, ie to josei no chii," 251–257.
37 Kurihara, *Takamure Itsue no kon'in*, especially Part 2, "Takamure gakusetsu no itoteki gobyō mondai," 169–380. See also "Takamure Itsue no joseishi zō."
38 Nishino Yukiko, "Shohyō: Kurihara Hiromu, Takamure Itsue no kon'in joseishi zō no kenkyū, 81–84; Ueno, "Takamure joseishi," 251–259; Nishikawa Yūko, "Sensō e no keisha to yokusan no fujin," 246–254. Also see Sonia Ryang, "Love and Colonialism in Takamure Itsue's Feminism: A Postcolonial Critique."
39 Inoue Kiyoshi's theory was criticized for not giving agency to most of the women themselves, among other points. See Rekishi kagaku kyōgikai, *Joseishi kenkyū nyūmon*, 1–18.
40 Kuroda Hiroko, *Josei kara mita chūsei shakai to hō*, 40 and 49–54. The so-called "Amino *joseishi*" (women's history) enables the history of the marginalized and the itinerant, without a stable institutional base or restrictions. See, for example, Amino Yoshihiko, *Chūsei no hinin to yūjo*.
41 See the review of *Nihon joseishi* (1982) by Takie Sugiyama Lebra. Joseishi sōgō kenkyūkai, *Nihon joseishi* and *Nihon josei seikatsushi*; Wakita Haruko, *Bosei o tou*.
42 Meanwhile, in 1987, the Collective introduced a single easy-to-read book, *Nihon joseishi*, which narrates the entire history of Japan. Twenty-five authors contributed to different sections of this volume, which was edited by Wakita Haruko, Hayashi Reiko, and Nagahara Kazuko.
43 Hotate Michihisa, *Chūsei no ai to jūzoku*; Kuroda Hideo, *Sugata to shigusa no chūseishi: Ezu to emaki no fūkei kara*. Art historians, such as Ikeda Shinobu and Chino Kaori, contributed greatly toward gendered analysis. See Ikeda Shinobu, "The Image of Women in Battle Scenes: 'Sexually' Imprinted Bodies," and Chino Kaori, "Gender in Japanese Art." Tabata Yasuko, "Women's Work and Status in the Changing Medieval Economy"; Amino Yoshihiko, *Shokunin uta awase*, esp., 58–76, 90–98. Iwasaki Kae's classic work, *Shokunin uta awase: Chūsei no shokunin gunzō*, offers a thorough introduction to various versions of "shokunin uta awase."
44 Sōgō joseishi kenkyūkai, *Nihon josei no rekishi*, 3 vols. Each volume had thirty to forty contributors. Itō Seiko and Kōno Nobuko, *Onna to otoko no jikū*, vol. 3. Sōgō joseishi kenkyūkai, *Nihon joseishi ronshū*, 10 volumes.
45 For example, see Tabata Yasuko and Hosokawa Ryōichi, *Nyonin, rōnin, kodomo*. On the institutional arrangement of wet nurses, see in English, Thomas D. Conlan, "Thicker than Blood: The Social and Political Significance of Wet Nurses in Japan, 950–1330."
46 Narikiyo Hirokazu, *Josei to kegare no rekishi*; Katō Mieko, *Nihon chūsei no bosei to kegarekan*. Also see Hitomi Tonomura, "Birth-giving and Avoidance Taboo: Women's Body versus the Historiography of 'Ubuya'."
47 Nagahara Keiji, "Joseishi ni okeru Nanbokuchō, Muromachiki," 160–171.
48 Wakita Haruko, *Women in Medieval Japan: Motherhood, Household Management and Sexuality*, especially, chap. 1.
49 Based on a detailed study of *Sanetaka-kō ki*. Gotō Michiko, "Chūsei kōki no 'ie' to sosen saishi: Sanjōnishike no tsuizenbutsuji ni miru," 263–279. Also Gotō, *Sengoku o ikita kuge no tsumatachi*, 92–127; Gotō, *Chūsei kuge no ie to josei*. In English, see, Michiko Gotō, "The Lives and Roles of Women of Various Classes in the *Ie* of Late Medieval Japan"; Mack H. Horton, "Portrait of a Medieval Japanese Marriage: The Domestic Life of Sanjōnishi Sanetaka and His Wife," 130–154. Ebisawa Miki, "Chūsei kōki no Ichijōke no tsumatachi: 'ie' no tsuma, sono sonritsu kiso to keishō," 244–256. The Ichijō family managed its decreasing income by sending all but one child into monasteries and convents.
50 Nishimura Hiroko, *Sensō, bōryoku to josei 1: Ikusa no naka no onnatachi*.
51 Ebisawa Miki, "15 seiki no sensō to josei" and "Nyokikō." Fujiki Hisashi, *Kiga to sensō no sengoku o iku*, 186–189.
52 Tabata, *Nihon chūsei*, 1998, 128–129.
53 See chapters in Ruch, *Engendering Faith* for a variety of topics covered in individual essays. Diana Y. Paul was the forerunner in addressing the question of women and Buddhism in the 1970s, in her *Women in*

Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in Mahāyāna Tradition. Other sample titles include: Edward Kamens, *The Buddhist Poetry of the Great Kamo Priestess: Daisaiin Senshi and Hosshin Wakashū*; Yung-Hee Kim, *Songs to Make the Dust Dance: The Ryōjin Hishō of Twelfth-Century Japan*; Bernard Faure, *The Red Thread*: *Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality* and *The Power of Denial: Buddhism, Purity, and Gender*; Rajyashree Pandey, "Review: Medieval Experience, Modern Visions," "Poetry, Sex, and Salvation: The 'Courtesan' and the Noble Woman in Medieval Japanese Narratives," and *Perfumed Sleeves and Tangled Hair: Body, Woman, and Desire in Medieval Japanese Naratives*; Ikumi Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures: Buddhist Propaganda and Etoki Storytelling in Japan*; Rachel Dumas, "Historicizing Japan's Abject Femininity: Reading Women's Bodies in 'Nihon ryōiki'"; James C. Dobbins, *Letters of the Nun Eshinni: Images of Pure Land Buddhism in Medieval Japan*; Max D. Moerman, *Localizing Paradise: Kumano Pilgrimage and the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan*; Lori Meeks, *Hokkeji and the Reemergence of Female Monastic Orders in Premodern Japan*; R. Keller Kimbrough, *Preachers, Poets, Women, and the Way: Izumi Shikibu and the Buddhist Literature of Medieval Japan*; Mori Ichiu, "Nichiren's View of Women"; Hank Glassman, *The Face of Jizō: Image and Cult in Medieval Japanese Buddhism*. A new, useful general survey is Barbara Ambrose, *Women in Japanese Religions*; and for the sixteenth century, Haruko Nawata Ward, *Women Religious Leaders in Japan's Christian Century, 1549–1650*.

54 Work on female entertainers includes Jacqueline Pigeot, *Femmes galantes, femmes artistes dans le Japan ancient, XIe–XIIIe siècle*; Janet R. Goodwin, *Selling Songs and Smiles: The Sex Trade in Heian and Kamakura Japan* and "Shadows of Transgression: Heian and Kamakura Constructions of Prostitution"; Michele Marra, *Representations of Power: The Literary Politics of Medieval Japan*; Terry Kawashima, *Writing Margins: The Textual Construction of Gender in Heian and Kamakura Japan*; Steven T. Brown, "From Woman Warrior to Peripatetic Entertainer: The Multiple Histories of Tomoe; Yung-Hee Kim Kwon. "The Female Entertainment Tradition in Medieval Japan: The Case of 'Asobi'"; William MacDuff, "Beautiful Boys in Nô Drama: The Idealization of Homoerotic Desire"; Eric C. Rath, "Challenging the Old Men: A Brief History of Women in Noh Theater."

55 Christina Laffin, *Rewriting Medieval Japanese Women: Politics, Personality, and Literary Production in the Life of Nun Abutsu*. Karen Brazell, tr, *The Confessions of Lady Nijō*; Margaret H. Childs, "The Value of Vulnerability: Sexual Coercion and the Nature of Love in Japanese Court Literature"; Hitomi Tonomura, "Coercive Sex in the Medieval Japanese Court: Lady Nijō's Memoir." Kimura Saeko views *The Confession* as a story of salvation (see Kimura, "Regenerating Narratives: The Confessions of Lady Nijō as a Story of Women's Salvation"): Edith Sara examines Lady Nijō as a daughter in "*Towazugatari*: Unruly Tales from a Dutiful Daughter."

56 For select aspects of *Takemukigaki*, see Tonomura, "Re-envisioning"; for translation, see Royall Tyler's *Fourteenth-Century Voices I: From the Bamboo-View Pavilion, Takemukigaki*. Written in *kana* script, *Oyudono no ue no nikki* and other documents transmitted by ladies-in-waiting to male officials destabilize the commonly held equation of the masculine Chinese script with official business. Sōgō joseishi kenkyūkai, *Nihon josei no rekishi: onna no hataraki* 100–2. Wakita, *Women in Medieval Japan*, ch. 5.

57 Steven D. Carter, *Householders: The Reizei Family in Japanese History*; *Regent Redux: A Life of the Statesman-Scholar Ichijō Kaneyoshi*, 180–182.

58 Tonomura et al., *Women and Class*, Appendix, 310.

59 Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," 1056; Ueno Chizuko explains the problems that prevail in Japanese women's history, clarifies the meaning of gender and the concept's utility, and advocates its incorporation into the current academic fields. She emphasizes that no historical study is possible without considering gender. See Ueno, "Rekishigaku to feminizumu: 'joseishi' o koete," esp. 178–179.

60 Ogino Miho, "Joseishi ni okeru 'josei' towa dareka: Jendā gainen o meguru saikin no giron kara."

61 Sakai Kimi. "Nihon chūsei ni okeru onna no yume, otoko no yume."

62 Ōguchi Yūjirō et al., *Jendāshi*, i. The quoted passage appears on p. 114. The *ie*–centered interpretive structure makes it difficult to innovate a new periodization. Accordingly, the book traces historical transformations through the rise of the *ie* society out of the archaic state system of *uji* (elite lineage), growth of the patrilineal descent system and the formation of patriarchal family, with the "establishment of the *ie*" in the fourteenth century, characterized by the diminution of women's authority. An entirely different approach to gender is Thomas Keirstead's "The Gendering and Regendering of Medieval Japan," which explores how Japan's historical periods have been gendered.

63 The precise analysis of terms is the method used by historians such as Amino Yoshihiko. See his *Rethinking Japanese History*. This method was visible in the 1980s, in a delightful collection of essays, *Kotoba no bunkashi*, 4 vols. In one of the essays, Kurushima Noriko analyzes the term "*goke*," and discovers that it did not always mean "a widow." See her "Goke to yamome," vol. 3, pp. 165–196.

64 Sōgō joseishi kenkyūkai, *Shiryō ni miru Nihon josei no ayumi*. One example of a promising source is Carl Steenstrup's translation of warrior families' advice literature. See his "Hōjō Shigetoki's Letter of Instruction to His Son Nagatoki: A Guide to Success in Thirteenth Century Japan," "The Gokurakuji Letter. Hojo Shigetoki's Compendium of Political and Religious Ideas of Thirteenth-Century Japan," and "The Imagawa Letter: A Muromachi Warrior's Code of Conduct Which Became a Tokugawa Schoolbook."

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19
Outcasts and marginals in medieval Japan

Janet R. Goodwin

In late classical and medieval Japan—roughly the eleventh through sixteenth centuries—certain groups of people were marked off from the rest of society in a negative way. The nature of that differentiation has been the topic of much modern scholarly debate. Were such people completely ejected from the social structure or consigned to its margins, or did they simply occupy a different social system from the agrarian structure that dominated Japanese society? How do we characterize people who, on the one hand, were confined to certain occupations that others might consider degrading, but on the other hand monopolized the right to perform those occupations and through them might have prospered or obtained power? What factors were involved in creating outcast status, and how were these factors applied to individuals and groups? Is it possible to find a common thread connecting lepers, butchers, entertainers, and garden designers, all of whom at certain times were designated as outcasts?[1] And perhaps most importantly for historians, how did both the perceptions and the actual conditions of such persons and communities change over time?

Perhaps one reason that this subject has aroused such vigorous debate is because it has modern political implications not found in the history of other broad groups, such as aristocrats, warriors, or cultivators. In the Edo period (1603–1867), certain people were segregated from the rest of society and suffered severe legal discrimination. The descendants of such groups continue even today to face social and economic stigma. Rightly or wrongly, these groups are often seen as the heirs of medieval victims of discrimination; thus just as the historiography of slavery cannot be separated from today's civil rights movement in the United States, the historiography of outcast and marginalized people needs to be considered in part from the viewpoint of liberation movements in today's Japan.

This is not to say that modern victims of such discrimination, or their Edo-period predecessors, necessarily form a community with a continuous history rooted in classical or medieval times. Some scholars posit continuity, while others do not. Nevertheless, the *perception* of a linear and hereditary process, from classical/medieval to Edo to modern times, has not only influenced modern scholars' understanding of earlier practices, but has stimulated research on these practices. Modern associations opposing discrimination have been active in collecting and analyzing relevant primary source materials and publishing articles based on them, some scholarly, some directed at a broad audience. Thus while exploring the historiography of outcast and marginalized

people in the premodern world, we should recognize the meanings that such history holds for many Japanese people today.

Certain factors—occupational, spatial, behavioral, and circumstantial—are central to any attempt to piece together that history. Some occupations, although necessary to the functioning of society at large and supported by those of highest status, were regarded as defiling. Certain spaces defiled people who inhabited them, or were defiled by their inhabitants, then becoming sources of defilement for others who came to live there. Behavior—crime, begging, itinerancy, violating sexual norms—could push one over the border, but standards were slippery and sanctions unevenly applied. Perhaps the most reliable factor was one that was simply circumstantial: contracting a disfiguring disease such as leprosy, in an era when such illness was often seen as karmic punishment. A common thread linking these factors is the concept of ritual pollution, which in itself has been the subject of much debate.

Outcast groups had different names and somewhat different functions and relationships with the larger society. Some of these names emerged late in the Heian period (794–1185) but all those mentioned below were in use by the early medieval (Kamakura) era (1185–1333). The term *hinin*, sometimes used for specific groups and sometimes for outcasts in general, literally means nonhuman. *Hinin* who commonly performed cleansing and purification work, especially in connection with burials and cremations, were also known as *kiyome* (purifiers), and beggars and lepers were also referred to as *hinin*. The word has a double meaning: originally a Buddhist term meaning a fearsome deity, it was sometimes used by monks and recluses to signify their withdrawal from society or to signify their ability to overcome defilement through Buddhist means.[2] A more common explanation is that *hinin* were not juridical persons, and did not have the same rights (or obligations) as others in society.

Another broad category of outcasts is *kawaramono* (riverbank dwellers, sometimes also called *kawarabito*). They lived in undesirable locations along rivers, where burials, cremations, and executions were carried out—for example, the banks of the Kamo river in the capital at Kyoto. *Kawaramono* were occasionally referred to as *eta*, a term that means "much pollution" and was regularly used for outcasts in the Edo period. A common *kawaramono* occupation was the disposal of horse and oxen carcasses—a job that gave them access to animal hides and the opportunity to make and sell leather goods such as sandals. Yet another term is *sanjo*, literally "scattered places," which refers to areas where marginalized people lived or to the people themselves. *Inujinin* served shrines in various capacities, from cleansing to policing. Their marginalized social status is suggested by the prefix *inu* (dog) to the term *jinin*, a general title for shrine functionaries. Finally, *shōmonji* refers to people with magico-religious and performance skills, who were nonetheless seen as beggars by late medieval times. There is considerable overlap and confusion among these terms, and scholars by no means agree on how to differentiate them.

Most references to outcasts in the documentary record are brief, scattered, and sometimes cryptic, but scholars have used them to examine the occupations, social status, and living conditions of such people, and to make assumptions about how and by whom they were controlled. Among the sources are documents from powerful elites—court and shogunal documents, courtier diaries, and the records of important temples and shrines. Since we hardly ever hear the voices of outcasts themselves, scholars have concentrated on the ways that such people were regarded and treated by society.

The earliest known reference to *kawarabito* (thought to be the same as *kawaramono*) appears in an entry dated 1016 in the courtier journal *Sakeiki*, which makes it clear that the *kawarabito* specialized in disposing of animal corpses.[3] As the earliest known reference to a prominent group of *hinin* who lived on Kiyomizuzaka on the outskirts of the capital of Kyoto (Heian-kyō), Ōyama Kyōhei cites an entry of 1031 in the courtier diary *Shōyūki*, that states that "people at the bottom

of the hill (*saka*)" were given charity.[4] Brief though they are, these references suggest that outcast groups had resided in the capital for some time, since the diaries express no surprise at their existence.

Records from temples, shrines, and individual religious practitioners provide rich sources for understanding outcast society. Religious institutions mobilized outcast groups for purification work, and Buddhist monks provided welfare for beggars, lepers, and other outcast people. A number of scholars have cited such records, some of which are discussed below. Literary sources such as tale collections and illustrated scrolls are often used to supplement a sketchy documentary record. A tale about a "rich beggar" in *Konjaku monogatarishū* suggests an interesting mismatch between wealth and social status.[5] Illustrated scrolls and screens not only indicate what outcasts looked like, what they wore, and some of the jobs that they performed, but also suggest attitudes toward them within the larger society.[6]

Nevertheless it is difficult to form a complete and credible picture of the lives of outcasts, or even to determine who was actually cast out from society, and when. Of course, Japanese society underwent many significant changes between the eleventh century, when outcasts first emerge in the sources, and the Edo period, when outcast status was legally fixed. Obviously these changes produced different conditions for people's lives. The nature, timing, and effects of these conditions have been debated over a number of years by scholars writing in both Japanese and English.

Two major arguments dominated work on medieval outcasts in the 1970s and 1980s. First, when and why were certain people and groups marked off from society and made victims of discrimination? Second, were these people truly outcast, or should historians rather emphasize their legal rights and their indispensability to mainstream society? Not all issues have been resolved, and work in the 1990s and later has often focused on narrower topics such as the type and extent of control exercised by elites.[7] In this chapter, I will examine these scholarly debates, concentrating on postwar and contemporary historical analyses.

Origins of outcast status

One theory on origins links late classical and medieval outcasts to craftsmen subordinated to government bureaus in the Chinese-style *ritsuryō* state. As that state began to disintegrate at the end of the ninth century, such status discrimination was legally abolished. According to postwar historian Hayashiya Tatsusaburō, however, some craftsmen retained their despised status and became subject to elites who established themselves as proprietors within the *shōen* (estate) system. Hayashiya sees these craftsmen as the predecessors of a long line of victims of discrimination, and argues that they lived in servitude in places called *sanjo*.[8] Thus according to Hayashiya, outcasts from later classical and medieval times can trace their origins to craftsmen subjugated first by the government bureaucracy and then by elite landholders who were the bureaucrats' heirs. This argument was challenged by a number of scholars in the 1970s and 1980s. For example, Wakita Haruko has maintained that early inhabitants of the *sanjo* were not necessarily outcasts, and that exclusion and discrimination were based on social conditions in medieval times, not on those in the early classical age.[9] Elsewhere, she suggests that it is unreasonable to search for a single cause of a multi-faceted phenomenon: that the names by which outcasts were called indicate several different origins.[10]

Several scholars have focused on concepts of ritual pollution to explain the origin of discrimination against certain groups and individuals. Contact with death was thought especially defiling. People about to die were often evicted from their homes so as not to defile their families, and pollution was contagious—it could be passed on from those who had direct contact with death

to others whom they met. Ōyama Kyōhei locates the origins of serious concern with death pollution among the aristocracy in the capital. While ordinary people had once buried their dead near their homes—or even possibly within shrine precincts—nobles insisted that burials be located as far away as possible from the sovereign's residence—not to mention their own! Ōyama argues that the fear of death pollution was originally an urban, elite phenomenon that eventually spread to commoners and the provinces.[11]

Specialized occupations emerged to deal with the pollution of animal and human corpses. The earliest known evidence for such a specialty comes from *Sakeiki*'s entry of 1016/1/2, which records that when an ox died in the stables of the Minister of the Left, "people of the riverbank (*kawarabito*)" were summoned to dispose of the corpse.[12] From at least the twelfth century, moreover, low-status people regularly swept the grounds of the sovereign's palace, temples and shrines, and the streets of the capital, ridding them of polluting objects such as dead animals as well as of ordinary dirt.[13] It was widely thought that in so doing, they took pollution upon themselves. Fear of plague, personified as the plague *kami*, also contributed to people's reluctance to touch human corpses. Both human burials and ceremonies to pacify the plague *kami* were turned over to specialists; Aomori Tōru cites a 1335 document that indicates that *inujinin* at Iwashimizu Hachiman shrine had the job of burning paper offerings to placate this *kami*, and concludes that the ceremony was well established by that time.[14]

As Wakita Haruko points out, however, other factors were also involved: poverty, disease, itinerancy, or begging could also lead to exclusion from society.[15] And once outcasts began to settle in permanent villages at the end of the thirteenth century, the very difference between ordinary agricultural villages and outcast settlements may have contributed to the perception that inhabitants of the latter were "base" people.[16] Thus both *people* and *places* became the repositories for pollution.

Most scholars today agree that discrimination stemmed from conditions in the late Heian and medieval periods, not from low status inherited from earlier times. The timing and severity of discrimination, however, remains a subject of debate.

Outcasts or people of skill?

The work performed by outcasts might not have seemed terribly desirable but it was absolutely necessary to the functioning of society. One might argue that this work was foisted onto people who had no choice but to take it, because they had already been exiled from their communities. Or, one might argue that tasks such as disposing of animal corpses, which included flaying them and using their hides to make leather products, were really skilled occupations that were perceived with some respect. Beginning with Kuroda Toshio and Amino Yoshihiko, a number of scholars have disputed such issues. The debate focuses on the early medieval period, since most scholars agree that from the late thirteenth century, discrimination against such occupational groups intensified and was applied to additional groups as well.

In the early 1970s, Kuroda Toshio proposed that "base" people such as *hinin* were outside the status order on which medieval society was built. In an often-quoted phrase, they occupied "a status outside of status (*mibungai no mibun*)"[17]—outside the landholding system and the socio-economic structure to which that system was central. Rather than pursuing occupations related to agricultural production, *hinin* took jobs such as construction, cleaning, and dealing with polluted matter,[18] including human and animal corpses as discussed above. According to Kuroda, those who dealt with pollution were seen first *as* polluted. Such people were criminals, exiles, lepers, and beggars who had been ejected from society and thus had to take on polluting work.[19]

Amino Yoshihiko has challenged Kuroda's interpretation. Amino's arguments are based on studies of the broad category of non-agricultural people: peddlers, iron casters, salt makers, seafarers, and performing artists, as well as *hinin* and others characterized as outcasts. Often itinerant, some non-agricultural people were beyond the control of local or regional lords, but rather had a license to travel and sell their wares that was guaranteed by the throne itself.[20] Others serviced temples, shrines, or other *shōen* proprietors. Instead of farming lands from which they paid a share of the crop as rents or taxes, they were often given the produce from "salary fields" to pay for their services. Rather than seeing salary fields as a way to reinforce the dependency and base status of non-agricultural workers, Amino points out that *shōen* officials and some warriors were compensated in the same way.[21] He argues that non-agricultural people, including *hinin*, should be classified as *shokunin* or "people of skill." He further maintains that in early medieval times, those who dealt with pollution professionally were regarded with fear and respect, accorded special status as temple or shrine workers, and seen as servants of the Buddhas and the *kami*; and that in fact, they were credited with the special power to nullify defilement.[22]

Kuroda Toshio has subsequently contested Amino's thesis, questioning the premise that purification, disposing of corpses, and assistance at burials amounted to a special skill that qualified their practitioners as *shokunin*. He also maintains that Amino over-emphasized organized groups of *hinin* living in special lodgings at Kiyomizuzaka near Kyoto and Narazaka near Nara. In Kuroda's view, the most typical *hinin* was the leper-beggar, not the cleanser of defilement.[23]

A number of other scholars have weighed in on this debate. Like Kuroda, Nagahara Keiji sees those who were cast out from their families and communities as the central objects of discrimination. Pointing out that such people were often called *kojiki* (beggar)-*hinin*, Nagahara maintains that calling them non-persons was appropriate:

> To be excluded from their communities, the base of all ordinary social and economic activities in medieval Japan, was to lose even the minimal social and economic privileges enjoyed by all. So, in a social sense, they ceased to be "persons."

Nagahara supports the view that the fear of death pollution played an important part in defining outcast groups, and notes that such fear was directed especially toward lepers.[24]

Nagahara's interpretation, which also seeks the roots of the Edo-period discriminatory system in medieval practices, is clearly at odds with that of Amino. Steering a somewhat middle course is Ōyama Kyōhei, who sees early medieval *hinin* and the like as occupying the bottom tier of commoner society—of low status but not outcasts—and points out that many of them were organized into groups that resembled merchants' and artisans' guilds known as *za*.[25] Wakita Haruko acknowledges good points on either side of the question, but generally speaking she favors Kuroda's interpretation.[26]

Based on his examination of illustrated scrolls that depict *hinin*, Kuroda Hideo has suggested a compromise view. He argues that in its portrayal of recipients of the itinerant monk Ippen's charity, *Ippen shōnin ekotoba* (1299) depicts a stratified *hinin* society. In one illustration, three different groups of alms recipients sit outside the temple where Ippen and his followers are located. Closest to the temple is a group of mendicant monks sitting in a circle. Then come beggars and disabled people in another circle, and finally lepers, either in a circle or a disorganized group, depending on the version of the scroll. Those considered most impure—lepers—are the farthest from the temple. One copy of the scroll dated in the mid-fourteenth century shows three men standing between the second and third groups, holding six-foot staffs and wearing white hoods and veils. Kuroda identifies these men as bosses (*chōri*) of *hinin* lodgings or their immediate underlings. It is such people as the *chōri* that formed the *za*-like structure of *hinin* lodgings, he argues;

and the others—the *hinin*-beggars, disabled, and lepers—were indeed outside the status system.[27] Thus Kuroda points to a layered structure of *hinin* society that may explain some differences in the way outcasts were viewed and treated.

One of the few Western scholars to examine the overall issue of outcasts and status discrimination throughout the medieval period is Thomas Keirstead, who characterizes the situation of medieval outcasts as fluid and piecemeal. He generally supports Amino's thesis of two separate political and symbolic economies—one based on agriculture and the other on non-agrarian activities: "Marginal to the first order, outcasts are almost archetypal carriers of the second."[28] Keirstead notes that the sovereign, who had to be ritually pure, was charged with dispelling pollution especially from the eleventh century—a task that he shared with outcasts who themselves increasingly took on the taint of pollution. Thus he endorses Amino's argument for a close connection between outcasts and the throne. Keirstead further points out the structural differences between the legal system of discrimination in the Edo period and the far more fluid medieval situation, thus challenging Nagahara Keiji's claim that the Edo system was rooted in medieval practices.[29]

Although the debate over the extent of discrimination against certain groups has not been settled, many scholars—including Amino—believe that at the end of the thirteenth century attitudes toward *hinin* and similar groups became far more negative than before, and that as Japan approached its later medieval age such groups became truly outcast.

One early indication of increasing stigma can be found in the illustrated scroll *Tengu zōshi*, which dates from the 1290s. Yokoi Kiyoshi has examined a well-known passage from this scroll. It depicts an "*eta* child" who uses a piece of flesh to snare a *tengu* and then prepares to eat it, declaring, "This looks like chicken! It has tasty wings!" *Tengu*, half-bird half-human creatures thought to live in the mountains, are used in this work to represent monks from prominent temples as well as mountain ascetics called *yamabushi*, lampooning them for corruption (as well as for eating meat). The scene is set in Kyoto at Shijō on the bank of the Kamo river, where sits a hut with two animal hides hung out to dry in the sun. The location, the hides, and the flesh bait identify the *eta* as a *kawaramono*. Yokoi argues that the "*eta* child" is not really a child, but an adult depicted with a child's hairstyle—lacking the topknot that identifies a male as a regular member of respected society.[30]

Not only did outcast groups face stronger contempt and discrimination from the end of the thirteenth century, but stigma fell upon additional groups as well, such as entertainers, certain crafts groups, and some female shamans. These changes have invited various explanations. Amino Yoshihiko, discussing those who had traditionally handled pollution, maintains that after the thirteenth century, attitudes toward ritual pollution began to change from fear to aversion, and those who cleansed pollution were no longer regarded with respect.[31] Nagahara Keiji links the development of new low-status occupations such as dyers and plasterers to a change in the power structure and the needs of elites, which stigmatized certain groups in order to monopolize their services.[32]

Elites reinforced stigma by pitting outcast groups against cultivators or townspeople. Matsuo Kenji cites the example of an irrigation pond on Hine estate in Izumi province that *hinin* dug in the early fourteenth century, on an order from the estate proprietor but against the wishes of the local cultivators.[33] Moreover, outcast groups such as *kawaramono* and *inujinin* were charged with apprehending and punishing criminals, a role that they assumed more frequently after the thirteenth century. Powerful elites used them to perform tasks that included beheading criminals and destroying their homes.[34] Thus one might imagine that the fear tinged with respect that adhered to those who cleansed pollution morphed into fear tinged with revulsion for at least some outcast groups.[35] These are a few of the possible reasons why stigma intensified and stigmatized groups expanded in the late medieval age, but we still await a conclusive explanation.

The structure and control of outcast groups

Groups such as *hinin* formed their own mini-societies that interacted in various ways with the larger social system. How were these groups structured and by whom were they controlled? Research on these issues has led to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of outcast society.

Perhaps the best-documented *hinin* groups in medieval times were those who lived in special lodgings called *shuku*. Ōyama Kyōhei has examined these structures in detail. There were two main *shuku* in the Kinai region: Kiyomizuzaka on the outskirts of Kyoto and Narazaka outside of Nara, both under the control of powerful religious institutions. Each *shuku* supervised a network of affiliates located along transportation routes in the Kinai region. The Kiyomizuzaka and Narazaka *shuku* quarreled over the control of branch *shuku* throughout the Kinai, in a dispute that lasted more than twenty years and often erupted into armed conflict.[36] *Shuku* residents and affiliates were organized into three tiers: bosses and their immediate subordinates, beggars and the disabled, and lepers—the stratified society visually depicted by *Ippen shōnin ekotoba*.[37] *Shuku* bosses oversaw territories specifically marked off for begging,[38] and it seems that beggars and lepers who did not reside in the *shuku* could be placed nonetheless under the bosses' control.

A close look at *shuku hinin* and their activities is provided by the writings of and about the Shingon Ritsu monk Eison (1201–1290), which have been examined by Japanese scholars such as Ōyama and Matsuo Kenji, and in English by David Quinter and Abé Ryūichi.[39] The 2015 monograph by Quinter examines Eison's outreach to *hinin* in the context of Shingon Ritsu practices and beliefs, particularly the veneration of the bodhisattva Monju (Skt: Mañjuśrī).[40]

Beginning in 1240, Eison and his associate Ninshō (1217–1303) initiated religious services and charitable work on behalf of *hinin*, a project that stretched over several decades. In *Kongōbusshi Eison kanshin gakushōki*, Eison describes his efforts to bring religious salvation and material help to outcasts and beggars. In 1267 and 1269, he conducted dedication services for the restoration of the temple Hannyaji outside of Nara, and the installation there of an image of Monju. Hannyaji was located between a graveyard and a leprosarium, and Monju was often identified with *hinin* by Ritsu monks such as Eison and his followers.[41] On the occasion of the dedication of the image, Eison's disciple Shinkū claimed that Monju had actually manifested himself as a gigantic leper who beat lazy monks.[42]

At the dedication ceremony for the image, Eison distributed alms to *hinin* from various *shuku*. Two thousand *hinin* gathered, and each received rice, bowls, and items helpful for begging such as a straw mat to sit on and a parasol as protection from the sun.[43] Then in 1275, at the request of Kiyomizuzaka *hinin*, Eison conducted services at that *shuku*, and asked that *hinin* sign a four-part oath. The oath specified that, on the occasion of a burial, if the clothing and implements of the dead were not left to the *hinin* as was the custom, they would not gather at the house of the deceased to complain; that they would not demand more alms than "the appropriate amount" at Buddhist services; that they would not force lepers to leave their homes and lodge in a leprosarium at the *shuku*; and that they would not abuse seriously ill *hinin* outside the *shuku* who begged for food in the city.

The oath reveals that *hinin* who assisted at funerals or burials had the right to take the clothing and implements of the deceased, as well as the right to ask for donations at Buddhist services. The third provision of the oath indicates the limits of *shuku* control over lepers; and the fourth provision, that there were beggars outside the *shuku* whom the *shuku hinin* were prone to harass. A similar oath, extracted in 1282 from the *hinin* of the Torosu *shuku* in Izumi province, notes that certain places were set aside as "begging grounds" recognized as such by the Kamakura shogunate, with which Eison had close ties. In some cases begging grounds were under the control of one of the main *shuku*, but there were also places where unaffiliated beggars were permitted to

operate.[44] Beggars had rights that could not be abrogated without reason by military officials such as *shugo* or *jitō*, or by *hinin* organizations.

Were *hinin* primarily beggars or purifiers (*kiyome*)? The items distributed at Hannyaji lead Kuroda Hideo to propose that beggars, the disabled, and lepers formed the core of medieval *hinin*.[45] Cleaning temples and shrines, as well as the streets of the capital, was, however, one function of *shuku hinin*. The Narazaka *shuku* was under the control of the powerful Nara temple Kōfukuji, and *shuku hinin* cleaned and purified the temple and the affiliated Kasuga shrine. From the middle of the thirteenth century, the Kiyomizuzaka *shuku* was controlled by Gion shrine in the capital, and ultimately by Enryakuji on Mt. Hiei, with which the shrine was affiliated. Kiyomizuzaka *hinin*, as well as affiliated *inujinin*, had purification duties connected to the shrine: a late medieval example is the latter's job to sweep the streets of the capital before the parade of the annual Gion festival.[46] Matsuo Kenji thinks that such activities were generally performed by only the upper stratum of the *shuku*; and that in late medieval times public functions such as policing were limited to this stratum.[47] Again it appears that one credible answer for the different ways that outcasts were perceived and treated lies in the stratification of their own society.

One might cynically conclude that religious institutions patronized outcasts in order to exploit their labor, not only as *kiyome* but also in construction work and the like. To give those such as Eison credit, however, it seems likely that they were motivated at least in part by genuine concern for the outcasts' welfare, since they regularly dispensed goods to beggars and lepers and sometimes established permanent charitable institutions. Andrew Goble notes that Ninshō set up a public medical facility in Kamakura, and cites other efforts by Buddhist monks to alleviate the suffering of outcasts, especially lepers.[48] Whether or not these efforts had positive results or just solidified the low status of their recipients is a topic of debate, as summarized by David Quinter and Abé Ryūichi.[49]

Secular institutions were also involved in the control of outcast groups. The latter included the Kebiishi, the capital police force that was charged, along with other duties, with controlling pollution within the city.[50] According to Niunoya Tetsuichi, *kawaramono* had worked under the Kebiishi to assist with executions and other forms of punishment since at least the mid-eleventh century.[51] Later the Samurai-dokoro, an office of the Kamakura and Muromachi shogunates, assumed supervision of *kawaramono* who performed punishment functions. When Akamatsu Mitsusuke was apprehended in 1441 for the assassination of shogun Ashikaga Yoshinori, *kawaramono* in military dress, under Samurai-dokoro auspices, carried out the punishment. They paraded Mitsusuke around the capital, beheaded him at the riverbank execution grounds, and displayed his severed head on a pike.[52]

Nagahara Keiji maintains that as forms of political power changed, so did the status and treatment of outcasts and the membership of their groups. The situation of outcasts, in other words, depended upon their patronage. Nagahara argues as follows: As the *shōen*-public land system developed from the eleventh century onwards, outcasts came to serve proprietary authorities in various ways, initially connected for the most part with death and its perceived pollution. Once isolated exiles or wanderers, outcasts were incorporated into the landholding system. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, outcast status was broadened to include craftsmen. Under the *daimyō* system that developed during the warring sixteenth century, outcasts were organized primarily to provide military necessities—particularly the leather goods that had long been tainted with the pollution of death. Nagahara concludes that outcast status was created to provide indispensable goods and services for those in power, and changed in accord with the needs of those elites.[53]

A source often used to illuminate the complex system of control over outcasts is an edict (*inzen*) from the retired sovereign's office, issued by Go-Uda In (1267–1324, r. 1274–1287) in

1318.[54] That order donated the labor of fifteen individuals known as *sanjo hōshi* to the Kyoto temple Tōji. They were to clean the temple, especially to remove sources of ritual pollution. The document has stimulated discussions of the way that special territories called *sanjo* and their residents were controlled.

But first, what were the *sanjo*? The term literally means "scattered places" but sometimes refers to their residents, who are also called *sanjomono* and *sanjo hinin* in addition to *sanjo hōshi*.[55] Wakita Haruko argues that *sanjo* were not originally territories where outcasts lived, but that in the late medieval period, they became directly connected with outcast status. As the earliest example of such a connection, Wakita cites the 1318 edict. The brief order raises questions about the parties that controlled the *sanjo* to begin with, as well as the subsequent authority over the "donated" *hōshi*. According to Wakita, the *sanjo* was not Go-Uda's personal holding, but a public holding controlled by the Kebiishi. Although their labor was donated to Tōji, the *hōshi* continued to live in the *sanjo* as members of a group that remained under Kebiishi control.[56] In other words, the *hōshi* had two masters. Other scholars provide somewhat different interpretations, but it is generally agreed that they remained under dual authority, the temple and the retired monarch.[57]

Miura Keiichi argues that a patrimonial system (*kasansei*) of control over outcast and marginal people emerged in the late medieval age.[58] Branches of the Fujiwara regents' family—the Nijō, Konoe, and Kujō—monopolized the labor of craftsmen, as well as that of *kawaramono* and *kiyome*. The Nara temple Yakushiji also exercised patrimonial authority, and Miura cites cases dating from the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries in which variously named outcasts apprehended and punished culprits on behalf of the temple. As payment, the outcasts often received the clothing of the culprits—dead or alive—just as *hinin* who participated in burials received the clothing of the dead. Miura points out that in the sixteenth century, Yakushiji *shukumono* (residents of *shuku*) were distinguished from *hinin*: the former lived in the town at the temple's gate and except for their police powers on behalf of the temple, were not distinguished from other residents. Their performance of punishment functions on behalf of Yakushiji, however, alienated them from the rest of the local population.[59]

Even if they did not monopolize authority over outcast groups, temples and shrines were among their most important controlling institutions in the late medieval age. Some of the most detailed information about outcasts comes from the records of these institutions or the diaries of their officials. For example, *Daijōin jisha zōjiki*, the diary of Jinson (1430–1508), the noble abbot of the Kōfukuji cloister Daijōin, elucidates the structure and duties of *shōmonji* groups in Nara affiliated with the temple. Two such groups, the "Ten Guilds" (Jūza) in the northern part of Nara and the "Five Locations" (Gokasho) in the south, operated under Daijōin auspices. According to Matsuo Kenji, the *shōmonji* performed both public and non-public functions; the former included cleaning Kōfukuji precincts, digging graves, performing construction labor, and carrying out punishments such as the destruction of a criminal's house. Non-public functions included sutra chanting, yin-yang divination, astrology, and fortunetelling; at the new year, for example, they went from door to door reciting sutras and charms.

Seven types of street performers—people of the "seven roads"—were subordinate to the Five Locations: actors in a form of popular theater called *sarugaku*; *arukishirabyōshi*, itinerant female singer-dancers; *arukimiko*, itinerant female shamans; bell-ringers (*kanetataki*); pot-beaters (*hachitataki*), who probably recited the *nenbutsu* while beating on pots and gourds; monkey trainers; and a group known as *arukiōkō*, which to my knowledge has never been satisfactorily defined. The term *aruki*, which means itinerant, probably applies to this entire set, and the appellation "seven roads" can have a dual meaning: it can refer to seven artistic pursuits, or to Japan's traditional seven-circuit highways. It seems that these performers were regarded as beggars. As Matsuo

points out, the *shōmonji* structure was similar to that of the *shuku hinin*, with an upper stratum that supervised a population of beggars.[60] Ultimate control over the *shōmonji*, of course, rested with Daijōin and Kōfukuji.

Performance, itinerancy, and gender

Itinerant female shamans and *shirabyōshi* were a relatively late addition to stigmatized groups. Female shamans in general had long occupied respected positions at shrines and continued to do so throughout the medieval period, but it seems that by the mid-fourteenth century, some had become detached from shrines and wandered about the countryside, performing divinations and telling fortunes. These were the *arukimiko* that Jinson mentions.

Shirabyōshi were performers who sometimes traded in sex. It is difficult to categorize them as outcasts during the Kamakura period, since they sometimes formed sexual liaisons with men of the highest status, such as the retired sovereign Go-Toba (1180–1239, r. 1183–1198). There is, however, some indication that in the thirteenth century, *shirabyōshi* were viewed as low-status persons. For example, a shogunal edict of 1267 concerning widows' and divorcees' inheritance rights limits those of *shiryabyōshi* and another type of female entertainer, *kugutsu*, calling them "base" (*bonpi*) women. While they were not designated by any of the names that regularly refer to outcasts, the edict clearly marginalizes them, and by accusing them of having "enticed" men into bequeathing them property, suggests that they were sexually transgressive.[61]

The position of *shirabyōshi* and other female entertainers in the Kamakura period, like that of *hinin*, has been debated by Japanese scholars. Amino Yoshihiko and Wakita Haruko have examined one case concerning *shirabyōshi*, using the same document to reach different conclusions. The case involved a lawsuit in 1256 concerning the indenture of one Tokuishime, probably a *shirabyōshi*. She had been pawned as security for a loan, and her guarantor Tamaō, clearly identified as a *shirabyōshi*, filed a deposition in the case. While Amino argues that Tamaō had the standing to present her case in court and the wealth to act as a guarantor, Wakita focuses on Tokuishime's situation as evidence for the sale of human beings in entertainer society. Toyonaga Satomi proposes a compromise solution similar to the one suggested for *hinin* by Kuroda Hideo: entertainer society was complex and stratified, and different individuals within it may well have been treated differently.[62]

The status of female entertainers and unaffiliated shamans becomes clearer in the fourteenth century, and Wakita Haruko notes their association with *shōmonji* and their residence in dry river beds or the *sanjo*.[63] Quoting a passage from *Gion shugyō nikki* dated 1352/2, Niunoya Tetsuichi claims that *shirabyōshi*, female shamans, and sexual entertainers called *asobi* were considered the "most sinful among women"[64]—indicating that they were regarded as prostitutes. While I think that the label "prostitute" was probably unevenly applied, materials from the mid-fourteenth century and later make it clear that by that time, some female performers belonged to stigmatized groups.

An entry of *Suwa daimyōjin ekotoba* dated 1365/5/5 suggests the contempt with which such groups were regarded. Performers had come to the shrine festival: "'Scattered people' (*sanzai*) also came.[65] We gave the usual allotment of cloth to the females and males." The terms used for females and males are *mesu* and *osu*, indicating animals rather than human beings. The passage continues:

> Then those in official seats removed their jackets and piled them up like a mountain, forming a barrier between those in charge and the vagabonds. Types such as *shirabyōshi*, female

> shamans, *dengaku*[66] performers, reciters of spells,[67] *sarugaku* performers, beggars, *hinin*, the blind and deaf, and invalids, tribes of ne'er-do-wells and wanderers, clumped together like rice plants, flax, bamboo, and reeds, and fought among themselves.[68]

Both the *shirabyōshi* and the female shamans were lumped together with *hinin*, beggars, and the disabled, who had formed the core of outcast groups since Kamakura times.[69]

The reference to similar groups in the fifteenth-century *Daijōin jisha zōjiki*, cited earlier, is far less pejorative, but clearly manifests their low status, and it is significant that this passage as well specifically notes women among the performing groups. Thus it appears that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the category of outcast was broadened to include itinerant entertainers, some of whom were women, and that these entertainers were consigned to the lowest tier of a stratified outcast society.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored outcast and marginalized people in late classical and medieval Japan, focusing on such issues as status, stigma, organization, and control. Research on this topic has been incredibly fruitful. Like many other topics related to non-elites in pre-Edo times, arguments are based on brief, scattered, and often ambiguous sources, but nevertheless help to illuminate an important segment of medieval society and thus, the structure of that society itself.

The big debate—were early medieval *hinin*, *kawaramono*, and the like really outcasts or were they people of skill—may never be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. It may be that the two major players, Kuroda Toshio and Amino Yoshihiko, simply approached the issue from opposite directions: Kuroda from the perspective of overall social structure in the realm, and Amino from the perspective of the non-agricultural people that he began to study in the mid-1970s. Thus their conclusions may draw as much from their starting points as from the historical evidence itself. And perhaps the most plausible explanation of seemingly conflicting evidence lies, as suggested by Kuroda Hideo and Toyonaga Satomi, in the stratification of outcast society.

Even so, ambiguities remain. The inclusion of religious practitioners among late medieval outcasts, such folks as shamans, diviners, and casters of spells, indicates that an element of the sacred may have been strengthened rather than muted over time. Perhaps even when most outcasts were firmly pushed to the bottom of society—if not outside the social structure altogether—they may have retained that "fearsome deity" aspect that once was signified by the term not-human.

Notes

1 The term *raibyō*, usually translated as leprosy, refers not only to Hansen's disease but also to several other disfiguring diseases (Andrew Goble, *Confluences of Medicine in Medieval Japan*, 67). Since the same may be said of the Biblical term that we translate as leprosy, I will use the terms leper and leprosy throughout.
2 Wakita Haruko, *Nihon chūsei hisabetsumin no kenkyū*, 91; Abé Ryūichi, "Mantra, *Hinin*, and the Feminine," 102.
3 Yokoi Kiyoshi, "Chūsei," 76.
4 Ōyama Kyōhei, *Nihon chūsei nōsonshi no kenkyū*, 405.
5 Wakita, *Nihon chūsei hisabetsumin*, 59. The tale she cites is Vol. 16 #34.
6 Kuroda Hideo, *Kyōkai no chūsei, shōchō no chūsei*, 135–180.
7 For overviews see Thomas Keirstead, "Outcasts before the Law: Pollution and Purification in Medieval Japan"; Hosokawa Ryōichi, *Chūsei no mibunsei to hinin*, 4.
8 Hayashiya Tatsusaburō, *Kodai kokka no kaitai*, 285–288.
9 Wakita Haruko, "Sanjo ron," 56.

10 Wakita, *Nihon chūsei hisabetsumin*, 57–58.
11 See Ōyama, *Nihon chūsei nōsonshi*, 390–396.
12 Yokoi, "Chūsei," 76.
13 For early examples see Amino Yoshihiko, *Nihon chūsei no hinōgyōmin to tennō*, 181–182; Niunoya Testuichi, *Mibun sabetsu to chūsei shakai*, 36–37.
14 Aomori Tōru, "Chūsei kōki hinin to kawaramono," 10–12.
15 Wakita, *Nihon chūsei hisabetsumin*, 59–61.
16 Yokoi Kiyoshi, "Chūsei minshū geinō—jo ni kaete," 13–14.
17 Kuroda Toshio, *Chūsei kyōdōtai ron mibunsei ron*, 212. This material was originally published in 1972 as "Chūsei no mibun to hisen kannen," *Buraku mondai kenkyū*, 33.
18 Kuroda Toshio, *Chūsei kyōdōtai ron*, 221.
19 Kuroda Toshio, *Chūsei kyōdōtai ron*, 282.
20 Amino Yoshihiko, *Muen, kugai, raku: Nihon chūsei no jiyū to heiwa*, 44; "Chūsei shoki ni okeru imonoshi no sonzai keitai," 358–367.
21 Amino, *Nihon chūsei no hinōgyōmin to tennō*, 186–187.
22 Amino Yoshihiko, *Rethinking Japanese History*, 185.
23 Kuroda Toshio, *Chūsei kyōdōtai ron*, 274–276.
24 Nagahara Keiji, "The Medieval Origins of the Eta-Hinin," 388–389.
25 Ōyama, *Nihon chūsei nōsonshi*, 390–392, 421–422.
26 Wakita, "Sanjo ron," 57–64; *Nihon chūsei hisabetsumin*, 79–80.
27 Kuroda Hideo, *Kyōkai no chūsei, shōchō no chūsei*, 148–152, 158.
28 Keirstead, "Outcasts before the Law," 272.
29 Keirstead, "Outcasts before the Law," 267–297.
30 Yokoi, "Chūsei," 89–92.
31 Amino, *Rethinking Japanese History*, 196–197.
32 Nagahara, "The Medieval Origins of the Eta-Hinin," 397–399.
33 Matsuo Kenji, *Chūsei no toshi to hinin*, 207.
34 Ōyama, *Nihon chūsei nōsonshi*, 418–419; Miura Keiichi, "Chūsei kōki ni okeru senmin no sonzai keitai," 102–109; Wakita, *Nihon chūsei hisabetsumin*, 103–104.
35 For one example, see Miura, "Chūsei kōki ni okeru senmin," 105–106.
36 Ōyama, *Nihon chūsei nōsonshi*, 405–406.
37 Kuroda Hideo, *Kyōkai no chūsei, shōchō no chūsei*, 151; Matsuo, *Chūsei no toshi to hinin*, 131–132.
38 Miura, "Chūsei kōki ni okeru senmin," 91.
39 Ōyama, *Nihon chūsei nōsonshi*, 406–410; Matsuo, *Chūsei no toshi to hinin*, 159–193; David Quinter, *From Outcasts to Emperors: Shingon Ritsu and the Mañjuśrī Cult in Medieval Japan*, esp. 86–126, and "Creating Bodhisattvas: Eison, *Hinin*, and the Living Mañjuśrī"; Abé, "Mantra, *Hinin*, and the Feminine."
40 Quinter, *From Outcasts to Emperors*.
41 Quinter, *From Outcasts to Emperors*, 89–90; "Creating Bodhisattvas," 453. See also Quinter's translation of Eison's votive text on the occasion (*From Outcasts to Emperors*, 286–292; "Creating Bodhisattvas," 469–473); and his translation of Nakatomi no Sukekata's account of the event (*From Outcasts to Emperors*, 292–293).
42 Takeuchi Rizō, *Kamakura ibun*, Vol. 21, 256–257 (doc. 16245); Hosokawa, *Chūsei no mibunsei to hinin*, 58–60; Quinter, *From Outcasts to Emperors*, 146–149, 295. See the discussion in Janet R. Goodwin, *Alms and Vagabonds: Buddhist Temples and Popular Patronage in Medieval Japan*, 125.
43 Matsuo, *Chūsei no toshi to hinin*, 171–172; Quinter, *From Outcasts to Emperors*, 292–293.
44 Ōyama, *Nihon chūsei nōsonshi*, 406–410; Matsuo, *Chūsei no toshi to hinin*, 183–185; Quinter, "Creating Bodhisattvas."
45 Kuroda Hideo, *Kyōkai no chūsei, shōchō no chūsei*, 155.
46 Kuroda Hideo, *Kyōkai no chūsei, shōchō no chūsei*, 164–165. For the connection between Gion shrine *inujinin* and Kiyomizuzaka, see Niunoya, *Mibun sabetsu*, 12.
47 Matsuo, *Chūsei no toshi to hinin*, 131–132.
48 Goble, *Confluences of Medicine in Medieval Japan*, 14–20.
49 Quinter, *From Outcasts to Emperors*, 123–126, and "Creating Bodhisattvas"; Abé, "Mantra, *Hinin*, and the Feminine."
50 On the origins and duties of *kebiishi*, see Karl F. Friday, *Hired Swords: The Rise of Private Warrior Power in Early Japan*, 128–140; or William Wayne Farris, *Heavenly Warriors: The Evolution of Japan's Military, 500–1300*, 166–168.

51 Niunoya, *Mibun sabetsu*, 27–28.
52 Niunoya, *Mibun sabetsu*, 27–28; Wakita, *Nihon chūsei hisabetsumin*, 104.
53 Nagahara, "The Medieval Origins of the Eta-Hinin," 385–403.
54 Wakita, "Sanjo ron," 64–69.
55 *Hōshi* is a loose term that refers to Buddhist clerics; here it probably means that such people donned monks' garb. *Mono* simply indicates people or residents.
56 Wakita, "Sanjo ron," 55–56, 64–66; *Nihon chūsei hisabetsumin*, 109–110.
57 Niunoya, *Mibun sabetsu*, 37–38; Matsuo, *Chūsei no toshi to hinin*, 153; Aomori, "Chūsei kōki hinin to kawaramono," 17.
58 The term patrimonial, coined by Max Weber, indicates a personal form of authority, more formalized than family (patriarchal) authority but less so than feudal authority.
59 Miura, "Chūsei kōki ni okeru senmin," 102–106.
60 Matsuo, *Chūsei no toshi to hinin*, 131–143.
61 Janet R. Goodwin, *Selling Songs and Smiles: The Sex Trade in Heian and Kamakura Japan*, 82. For the edict, see Satō and Ikeuchi, *Kamakura bakufu hō*, 226–227 (Tsuikahō # 435).
62 Amino, *Nihon chūsei no hinōgyōmin to tennō*, 184–185; Wakita Haruko, "Chūsei ni okeru seibetsu yakuwari buntan to joseikan," 96; Toyonaga Satomi, "Chūsei ni okeru asobi no chōja ni tsuite," 406. The document is in Takeuichi, *Kamakura ibun* Vol. 11, 156–157 (doc. 7992). For a more thorough discussion see Goodwin, *Selling Songs and Smiles*, 121–123.
63 Wakita, "Chūsei ni okeru seibetsu yakuwari buntan," 96–99.
64 Niunoya, *Mibun sabetsu*, 129.
65 I think this refers to people from the *sanjo*, although there has been some debate on whether *sanzai* and *sanjo* mean the same thing.
66 A type of popular street performance.
67 This can also indicate a type of *sarugaku*.
68 *Suwa daimyōjin ekotoba*, 529–530.
69 Not all female shamans were stigmatized, since those affiliated with the shrine were mentioned in the same source with no indication of contempt.

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Medieval warriors and warfare

Kawai Yasushi, with Karl F. Friday

Japan's medieval age, stretching from the eleventh century to the close of the sixteenth, was an era of conflict. From the Genpei War of the late twelfth century to the clashes that marked the end of the Kamakura shogunate and the Nanbokuchō Wars in the fourteenth, to the campaigns of the *sengoku daimyō* of the fifteenth and sixteenth, warfare enveloped the country and steadily advanced in scale and intensity. Historians have been exploring these struggles at length since the Second World War, analyzing their political meaning within the evolution of governance and landholding in the countryside and societal transformation. But it has only been since the 1990s that scholars have turned serious attention on warfare itself, examining the composition of armies, the structure and shape of battle, the form and usage of weapons and armor, and the place of war within the evolving warrior-dominated polity of the time. These new avenues of inquiry have, in consequence, significantly revised our perspectives on and understanding of the Kamakura and Muromachi shogunates and the development of warrior rule.

This chapter will outline this new research, with particular attention to the origins of warriors, the nature of battle, and the emergence of warrior rule. For reasons of space, our focus will be primarily on the early medieval period, particularly the Heian and Kamakura eras.

The beginnings of the *bushi*

The men-at-arms who rode about the battlefields of medieval Japan were known to their contemporaries by a variety of names, including *bushi*, *tsuwamono*, *mononofu*, *heishi* (or *hyōji*), and *musha*, but they are most familiar to modern readers—particularly audiences outside Japan—as samurai. Indeed, the word "samurai" has entered the lexicons of English and numerous other Western languages as a synonym for "Japanese warrior." In origin and premodern usage, however, the term had a different meaning. Deriving from the verb *saburau* ("to serve"), it initially designated middle-ranked court nobles who served as personal retainers to high-ranking aristocrats or imperial family members. Although some such retainers performed military duties for their masters, most were civil servants. And while most medieval warriors were also "*samurai*," in the sense that they served overlords, it was their profession of arms, rather than this service per se, that defined them.

Historians, therefore, generally prefer the term *bushi* (literally, "military professional") as a generic appellation for medieval warriors. "*Bushi*" first came into use during the early eighth century, as a description for military officers and officials, but the warrior order to which scholars today refer by this word began to appear in the provinces and the capital during the tenth century.[1]

Until fairly recently, the "rise of warriors" was commonly cited as a development of eastern Japan, with the *tōgoku bushi* ("warriors of the East") understood to have been the archetype of the medieval warrior order. This view derives from Hara Katsurō's landmark 1906 study, *Nihon chūsei shi*. Therein, Hara outlined the creation of the Kamakura shogunate by eastern warriors in analogy to the process that led to Europe's medieval age. He argued that, as in the German villages of the Roman Empire, the civilization of the capital did not extend to the eastern hinterlands; and that, in consequence, stalwart warriors emerged there as the driving force of historical development and gave rise to the Kamakura era—which he viewed as the starting point of a new and uniquely Japanese civilization.[2]

The focus on warriors as the impetus behind the transition from the classical to the medieval era continued in the work of Ishimoda Shō, a leading figure in postwar scholarship on medieval Japan. Searching for the process through which the court-centered polity and estate (*shōen*) system of the classical age gave way to the "feudal" polity of medieval times, Ishimoda identified *bushi* with the *zaichi ryōshu* ("on-site proprietor" or "local landowner") class that dominated the agricultural villages of the Heian period. His "proprietor system theory" (*ryōshusei ron*) exerted an enormous influence on subsequent scholarship. Indeed, until the 1960s, most research on medieval warriors focused on their role as landholders, and merely debated the process by which this system developed.[3]

Proponents of the "proprietor system theory" contended that warriors emerged spontaneously during the middle years of the Heian period, much as knights had in northwestern Europe a few centuries earlier, when rural landholders took up arms, developed private retinues of fighting men, and rapidly emerged as the de facto ruling power in the countryside. This militarization of the gentry was said to have been necessitated by the ineptitude of the imperial state (*ritsuryō*) military and police system, which had been all-but abandoned by the early ninth century, resulting in a breakdown of order in the countryside severe enough to force those who owned or administered estates in the countryside to arm themselves, in order to protect their lands and control the peasants who lived on them.[4]

By the 1970s, however, this scenario was coming under fire from two fronts. First, newer work on landholding and rural governance had produced a radically different portrait of the Heian polity and a substantially revised chronology for the onset of warrior rule, stressing the adaptability and resiliency of the imperial court as a ruling body and the seat of governing authority. The new scholarship highlighted the ability of the court nobility to maintain control over landholding and governance in the countryside throughout the Heian period, and that warriors (and other rural land magnates) only began to break out of these constraints during the Kamakura period.[5]

Second, historians had begun to look more closely at Heian warriors *as* warriors, observing that *bushi* appeared in the capital as well as the provinces, becoming a readily identifiable occupational sub-group within the middle ranks of the court nobility, serving the interests of the ruling elite. They also called attention to the distinctive horse-borne archer-centered style of fighting the *bushi* developed, which they argued, was best-suited to mobility and offensive operations—and not at all the sort of military technology likely to be adopted for defensive purposes.[6]

Toda Yoshimi and Ishii Susumu, writing in the 1970s, were two of the first scholars to consider the problem of how the *bushi* came into being as an outgrowth of the state's military and

police apparatus, rather than as an element of the provincial landholding system. Toda examined the military conditions of the ninth century and identified a "military revolution" (*gunsei kaikaku*) that, over the course of the late ninth to early tenth centuries, gave rise to bands of mounted archers. This, he concluded, marked the origins of the *bushi*. Ishii, in turn, analyzed the provincial military system of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, theorizing that provincial elites came to be identified as warriors on the basis of records appointing them to military offices and family genealogies maintained by provincial government offices (*kokuga*). Their work sparked interest in the workings of the Heian military system among a number of historians, including Fukuda Toyohiko, Shimomukai Tatsuhiko, Inoue Mitsuo, Morita Tei, Horiuchi Kazuaki, Takayama Kaoru, and Shirakawa Tetsurō.[7]

In the 1980s and 1990s, researchers built on these findings, deepening the debate over how and when warriors came to be. One group focused on the military skills and equipment that defined the emerging warrior order, and observed that mounted archery first became central to military affairs in Japan not during a ninth-century "military revolution," but under the *ritsuryō* military.

Karl Friday, for example, traced the evolution of the state's military system from the *ritsuryō* era to the end of the Heian period, arguing that an order of professional fighting men in the countryside and the capital emerged gradually over the course of the eighth to tenth centuries, as changing military needs and priorities led the court to restructure its armed forces to center on small, highly mobile bands of mounted archers, and to cease efforts to draft and drill the population at large, concentrating instead on co-opting the privately acquired skills of martially talented elites.[8]

Working at nearly the same time as Friday, William Wayne Farris took the idea of continuity even further, contending that the basic patterns governing the military system into the fourteenth century were already in place in the 600s: The Japanese had adopted mounted archery, the military was organized around local strongmen, and military men had assumed important roles in the political structure. Recurrent modifications to the missions, tactics, and procedures for mobilization and command of the military did not obliterate the original pattern. The imperial state armies still centered on the extended families of the pre-*ritsuryō* local elites leading peasants conscripted through local political and economic powers, and local strongmen continued to occupy an essentially similar position in society, the economy, and the military through the end of the Kamakura period.[9]

A decade later, Takahashi Masaaki reversed the assertions of the earlier "proprietor system theory," contending that the birthplace of the *bushi* was the capital, not the agricultural villages of the east. Noting that the bows, the curved *tachi* swords, the *ōyoroi* and *haramaki* armors, the saddles and other equestrian gear, and even the peculiar form of mounted archery that collectively characterized Heian-period warriors were all developed in the capital, Takahashi argued that the first *bushi* were not provincial landholders but rather the officers of the court's guard and police units.[10]

Takahashi was following Toda and Ishii (and, albeit unwittingly, Friday and Farris) in defining warriors in terms of their occupations. In this view, *bushi* were those who performed military functions for the state and were recognized as such—authorized by the state to use their private military resources on its behalf. To this Takahashi added an additional qualifier, distinguishing true *bushi* from others who possessed martial skills, on the basis of membership in families for whom the bearing of arms became a house profession (*kagyō*) pursued from generation to generation.[11]

A growing hereditary identification of particular skills and services with specific lineages was, to be sure, an important feature of aristocratic society during the middle and late Heian period.

This phenomenon became pronounced between the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Nevertheless, the lineages that came to be known as warrior houses around this time and forward were not the same houses that had served in the court guard units of earlier decades. This raises questions about the appropriateness of including the *ritsuryō* era and early Heian era court military officers within the definition of *bushi*.

Some historians—most notably Motoki Yasuo, Shimomukai Tatsuhiko, and Kawajiri Akio—therefore date the beginnings of the warrior order to the mid-tenth century. Shimomukai, for example, observes that all of the individuals listed under the heading of "*bushi*" in Ōe Masafusa's early twelfth-century roster of the most prominent figures of the time, *Zoku honchō ōjōden*, were sons or grandsons of the warriors involved in the campaign against Taira Masakado in 939. He further notes that the vast majority of medieval warrior houses traced their ancestry (legitimately or not) to the victors in the Masakado affair (Taira Sadamori, Minamoto Tsunemoto, and Fujiwara Hidesato).[12]

Accordingly, Shimomukai and others argue that the *bushi* order began in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, when prominent lineages of the Kanmu Heishi, Seiwa Genji, and Hidesato-ryū Fujiwara emerged as hereditary warrior houses in the capital.[13] The scions of these houses were middle-ranked court nobles whose careers centered on appointments to provincial government offices. Many such career provincial officials (*zuryō*) found that they could use the power and perquisites of their offices, and the strength of their court connections, to establish landed bases in their provinces of appointment and to continue to exploit the resources of these provinces even after their terms of office expired. The result was the diffusion of warrior houses to the countryside.[14]

The Kamakura shogunate and the advent of warrior rule

In the early postwar era, Ishimoda Shō and Nagahara Keiji analyzed *bushi* history within a Marxist framework that cast the appearance of the Kamakura shogunate as a landmark in the transition from a classical "slave state" to a medieval "feudal age." They saw the Genpei War as a revolt of provincial warriors—whom they defined as a class of militarized local landholders (*zaichi ryōshu*)—against the estate (*shōen*) system and the rule of the court aristocracy, and saw the shogunate as an instrument for rallying the political power of rural elites. As such, they maintained that it represented, alternatively, a "transitional regime" bridging classical and medieval society, or the first stage of feudal rule, albeit in a form that still retained elements of the classical state. Both scholars were attempting to attach a progressive significance to the founding of the shogunate as the first warrior government. Yet because they began from the premise that aristocratic rule and the *shōen* system were components of the classical state, they were forced to view the shogunate, which coexisted with both institutions, as transitional.[15]

As research on Heian social and economic history progressed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, however, Toda Yoshimi and others began to characterize the landholding arrangements that held under the late Heian estate system as "feudal," which meant that the court aristocrats—the proprietors of the estates—must themselves have represented a form of feudal power.[16] This influential view of things dramatically altered the historical significance of the founding of the Kamakura regime. For if a feudal polity had already come into being before the shogunate was created, there was no logical imperative to assign any particular meaning to the shogunate, in terms of the shift from the classical to the medieval era. This raised the further question of how to understand the Genpei War and its relationship to the founding of the shogunate.

As we saw in the previous section, historians have, since the 1970s, increasingly come to regard the early *bushi* not as provincial landlords arming themselves in order to rule their estates,

but as an occupational group—a professional warrior order—serving the ruling class. This view has significant implications for our understanding of the Kamakura regime and its functions. For as Irumada Nobuo observed, the shogunate was first and foremost a *military* organization, the product not of the provincial landlord class per se, but of a particular group within it, the *bushi*.[17] As such, the regime could not have been an inexorable product of the evolution of the Heian era landholding system, which raises new questions concerning how and why it came into being. A number of researchers have sought answers in the military developments of the Genpei War.

As early as the 1970s, Jeffrey Mass, for example, saw the shogunate as an outgrowth of Minamoto Yoritomo's efforts to raise an army in order to avenge his father and to regain the station in life that, but for his sire's misadventures in the 1159 Heiji Incident, would have been his birthright. But Mass still deemed Yoritomo's objectives to be as much political as military.[18] Kawai Yasushi, on the other hand, traces the introduction of the shogunate's key institutions more directly to tactical exigencies.

Like Mass, Kawai centered his attention on the Kamakura regime's network of *jitō* (estate stewards) and *shugo* (provincial constables), which represented both the means by which Yoritomo extended his grip across the country, and the root of the shogunate's authority. Virtually all accounts of Kamakura history locate the foundation of the regime's permanent legal identity—and therefore its political authority—in the court's recognition of Yoritomo's exclusive authority over his vassals (*gokenin*), which crystalized in his (and his successors') right to appoint his men as *jitō* on estates and public domains and as *shugo* over provinces countrywide. Traditionally, this authority was held to have derived from an edict known as the Bunji Chokkyo ("Bunji [era] Charter"), issued by Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa in the eleventh month of 1185.[19] But as both Mass and Kawai noted, Yoritomo had been posting vassals to provincial constableships and estate and district managerial titles from long before this.

In Kawai's treatment, the key point is that Yoritomo's selection of the lands over which he assigned *jitō* was anything but random. Quite the contrary, he placed *jitō* only on lands belonging to enemy warriors. This, Kawai argues, constituted a military occupation of enemy lands and domiciles. That is, the shogunate's *jitō* network developed out of a policy of confiscating enemy bases and granting them as benefices to Kamakura vassals. This policy of handing benefices to vassals was a powerful recruiting tool for Yoritomo. It was also a tool unavailable to his Taira opponents, because, as the nominal government army, they could not simply assume control over lands taken from warriors in rebellion against the court—for such lands legally fell back under court jurisdiction. But Yoritomo, who was himself formally a rebel and outlaw, was not constrained by these principles. Thus the *jitō* system, Kawai concludes, began not as the result of any court edict, but as the structural base of a rebel army.

The *shugo* post, he continues, also evolved during the war years, when the unprecedented scope and scale of the fighting required mobilization not just of warrior vassals but also of lower-status troops, and of laborers to construct and raze fortifications and such. This task necessitated borrowing the authority of the provincial governments, and the creation of officers with province-wide command and mobilization authority.[20]

Increasingly, then, historians are emphasizing the role wartime military policies and innovations played in the emergence of warrior rule in early medieval Japan. Such reassessment has not been limited to the origins of the Kamakura regime. Researchers also analyze the evolution and expansion of warrior political power during the fourteenth-century Nanbokuchō conflict that established the Muromachi shogunate through the lens of military developments.[21]

Warfare in early medieval Japan

Reconstruction of early medieval warfare poses a thorny challenge. Until fairly recently, historians' images of Heian and Kamakura era battlefield ethics and behavior were predominantly shaped by analyses of literary wartales (*gunkimono*), particularly the *Heike monogatari*, the classic saga of the Genpei War. Long assumed to have been built closely around accounts compiled shortly after the events they portray occurred and preserved more or less verbatim henceforth, *Heike monogatari* and other *gunkimono* beckon historians as detailed, and readily accessible, depictions of early medieval warfare. As early as the 1960s, however, literary scholars had begun to question the historical reliability of these chronicles, observing that much of the compelling detail contained in their narratives was demonstrably manufactured of whole cloth.[22]

The wartales are plagued both by distortions introduced by the entertainment or didactic purposes for which they were produced, and by problems of anachronism and implausibility introduced by the authors' lack of familiarity with real battlefields.[23] On the other hand, the sorts of sources scholars deem most reliable—diaries, letters, and other contemporaneous documents—are maddeningly laconic in their discussions of battles. Most, particularly those dealing with the period before the 1180s, tell us little more than the time, place, and results of encounters between warriors. For a thoroughgoing understanding of early medieval warfare historians must, therefore, bridge these rather substantial gaps through careful analysis of sources that are fictionalized to an uncertain degree.

These include pictorial, as well as literary records. One of the most promising avenues of research is analysis of the numerous illustrated scrolls (*emaki*) that depict the wars and other military adventures of the early medieval era. A dozen or so *emaki* produced during the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries survive, although with the singular exception of Takezaki Suenaga's illustrated petition for rewards, the *Mōko shūrai ekotoba*, all of these scrolls postdate the events they portray by a half-century or more.[24]

We also have other literary accounts of warriors and warfare, ranging from anecdotes in tale collections like the *Konjaku monogatarishū* to longer chronicles of specific wars, such as *Shōmonki* and *Mutsuwaki* (which relate Taira Masakado's rebellion and the so-called Former Nine Years' War of 1051–1062), to epic sagas like *Taiheiki*, which spans some forty volumes. To be sure, all of these are tales and stories, not historical records, and must be used carefully. But although they have been embellished, they nevertheless reflect the perceptions—the images of warriors and battles—of men who lived roughly contemporaneously to the events depicted. As such, many historians argue, they come at least a step closer to portraying the reality of early medieval battlefields than the *Heike monogatari* and other *gunkimono* written centuries after the fact.

Researchers also make cautious use of some early variant *Heike monogatari* texts. The most helpful of these is the Enkyōbon version recorded during the thirteenth century. These accounts differ considerably—sometimes dramatically—from the more familiar Kakuichibon, and, if approached with appropriate caution and skepticism, constitute indispensable sources of information.

For the Kamakura period, we also have the Kamakura shogunate's official chronicle of its own history, *Azuma kagami*. As a roughly contemporaneous chronicle written by warriors about warriors, this text is arguably the most believable source for information on early medieval Japanese warfare. Nevertheless, it covers only the years between 1180 and 1266 and is far from comprehensive even for that span of time.[25]

A fifth, and highly promising, resource for information on late Kamakura and Nanbokuchō era warfare are reports by warriors arriving for service (*chakutōjō*), post-action battle reports (*kassen teoi chūmon* or *kassen teoi jikkenjō*), and petitions for rewards (*gunchūjō*). Some 1500 such

documents survive from the fourteenth century, providing fertile ground for analysis concerning troop movements, casualties, and—in some examples, at least—actions taken.[26]

Long-familiar accounts of combat during the Heian period describe a picturesque and quaintly ritualized order to battles, casting them as set pieces, governed by gentlemanly norms and conventions, and following an elaborate choreography in which the conduct of the fighting seemed as important as the result: Challenges were issued, followed by agreements on the time and place for fighting. At the appointed hour, the two sides would draw up their lines, and messengers would exchange formal declarations of hostilities. Special whistling arrows were then used to signal the opening of combat, which would commence with a general—and mostly ceremonial—exchange of volleys of arrows at a distance. After that, individual warriors would gallop forward; recite their names, pedigrees, and battle resumes; and then select suitable opponents for one-on-one combats that would constitute the main part of the day's fighting.

This image of ritual and formalism in early samurai warfare has been virtually reified in popular and textbook accounts.[27] But academic historians have also portrayed early *bushi* fighting as ritualized. Indeed, until recently, the terms "ritual" and "formalism" were nearly ubiquitous in standard treatments of this topic. In the mid-1980s, for example, Ishii Shirō enumerated six fundamental rules of engagement for the period, including fighting centered on one-to-one duels (*ikki uchi*) and the selection of suitable or worthy opponents by self-introductions (*nanori*). He noted that none of these rules were absolute—that there were more than a few exceptions to any of them, but argued that the rules existed nonetheless. Similarly, Eiko Ikegami characterized early *bushi* warfare as "a complex social ritual of death, honor and calculation."[28]

The 1990s and early 2000s, however, witnessed a substantial outpouring of new publications, giving rise to a lively debate over the shape of early medieval warfare. Based on close analysis of the diverse mixture of sources and evidence discussed above and cross comparison with work on military technology and tactics in other times and places, this new work emphatically rejects many of the hoary stereotypes that dominated previous treatments of the subject—most particularly the notion that Heian combat centered on gentlemanly one-on-one encounters.

One popular avenue of research approaches the reconstruction of battle from detailed examinations of the developmental history of weaponry and armor and their manufacture. Presaged in publications by Toda Yoshimi, Morita Tei, and Inoue Mitsuo in the 1970s, this line of inquiry exploded in the 1990s, at the hands of Sasaki Minoru, Seki Yukihiko, Fukuda Toyohiko, Sakamoto Akira, Takahashi Masaaki, Mori Toshio, Toyoda Aritsune, Nomura Shin'ichi, and Kondō Yoshikazu.[29] Other historians—notably Kawai Yasushi, Takahashi Masaaki, Noguchi Minoru, Gomi Fumihiko, Thomas Conlan, and Karl Friday—have focused on the relationship between evolving political and social structures and the conduct of war.[30] The evolution of fortifications has also provided fertile ground for exploration.[31]

The new scholarship emphatically discards the image of chivalrous combat between horsemen who selected appropriate opponents by ritualized recitations of pedigrees and achievements. Heian warfare is now envisioned to have been every bit as brutal and opportunistic as its later medieval counterpart. Tactical planning centered on attempts to catch opponents off guard, in ambushes or surprise attacks, particularly night attacks on the enemy's home. Raiding warbands often laid waste to surrounding fields and to the homes of the principal quarry's allies and dependents, as well. Combat between mounted warriors involved individuals and small groups circling and maneuvering around one another like dogfighting aviators. Commanders also conscripted or hired foot soldiers, armed them with bows or polearms, and deployed them as active combatants—not just grooms and attendants to the mounted warriors, as they were often portrayed in older accounts—fighting side by side with horsemen, in mixed units, rather than in distinct companies of infantry.[32] Pitched battles consisted of aggregates of smaller-scale confrontations: mêlées of

archery duels and brawls between small groups, punctuated by general advances and retreats, and by volleys of arrows launched by bowmen on foot, protected by portable walls of shields.

But while the revisionist scholarship may be approaching a new consensus with respect to Heian-period warfare, debates about what happened during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries remain lively. Indeed, a veritable legion of historians have identified fundamental shifts of strategy and tactics at various moments during the latter period.

Among the most influential of these was Ishii Susumu, in the early 1960s. Basing his analysis primarily on the battle accounts in *Heike monogatari* and related literary works, Ishii argued that while late twelfth-century warriors continued to fight as individuals and on horseback, they no longer engaged in the galloping archery duels favored by their forebears. Instead, they confronted one another at more intimate range, using swords or grappling techniques to unseat opponents, whom they would then finish off on the ground, with daggers.[33]

In the 1970s, Satō Shin'ichi, Amino Yoshihiko and others ascribed a similar sea change in the conduct of battles to exposure to Mongol tactics and military organization during their invasion attempts in 1274 and 1291. The mounted professional warriors, fighting as individuals with bow and arrow that had dominated Heian and early Kamakura era battlefields, they maintained, were superseded at this time by massed infantries wielding bladed weapons—particularly a new form of spear called the *yari*. In Amino's view, this change in tactical paradigms became the impetus to profound social and political upheavals.[34]

More recently a number of studies have pointed to the expanding scale of war, and size of armies, during the Genpei and Nanbokuchō conflicts as the most important military development of the era, and the catalyst to other changes.[35] Kawai Yasushi argues that the relatively sudden appearance during the Genpei War of armies an order of magnitude bigger than anything experienced before then—a product of the countrywide scope of the conflict—introduced new tactical problems, which were exacerbated by a decline in quality of troops that accompanied efforts to enlarge the ranks. The majority of even the cavalrymen who filled out the Genpei armies must, he reasons, have been relatively new recruits to military life. Commanders would therefore have needed to find ways to compensate for the lack of skill of many of their troops at combat in the classic, archery-at-a-gallop style. Accordingly, he concludes, the 1180s saw a sharp increase in the use of fortifications, which in combination with the larger armies, concentrated battles and battlefields, rendering the former longer and the latter more crowded. And that, in turn, he says, limited the mobility of both attacking and defending troops, mitigating some of the advantages of mounted troops, enhancing the value of foot soldiers in the fighting, and giving rise to more extensive interaction and cooperation between horsemen and troops on foot.[36]

Kondō Yoshikazu contends that the introduction of more powerful bows in the late twelfth century enabled warriors to shoot from longer distances, eliminating the need to gallop close to opponents, while the advent of lighter, less awkward armor in the fourteenth century permitted *bushi* greater freedom of movement when on horseback, and greater comfort when fighting on foot. Accordingly, he asserts, the prevailing tactic of the Genpei War was to shoot from horseback, with the animal standing at rest rather than at a gallop, while by the Nanbokuchō era, horse-borne warriors fought mainly with bladed weapons, and archers plied their trade on foot. Abe Takeshi, however, maintains that from the Genpei War onward, horses were more generally used for transport than for riding, and that mounted troops rarely actually clashed on horseback, preferring instead to dismount just outside arrow range and close on foot, to fight with swords.[37]

Okada Seiichi and Futaki Ken'ichi see fourteenth-century warfare as having centered on guerilla tactics, conducted by new types of military forces that appeared during the late Kamakura

period. But Imai Shōnosuke argues that what stands out most about Nanbokuchō period armies is the degree of cooperation between cavalry and infantry, and the degree to which both horsemen and infantrymen became specialists in the use of either the bow or the blade—which, he contends, indicates that by the fourteenth century, military forces had evolved from arrays of individual warriors into true armies.[38]

Another group of historians rejects the notion that either the Genpei or the Nanbokuchō eras saw *any* sort of truly fundamental transformation of warfare. Thomas Conlan, Shakadō Mitsuhiro, Suzuki Masaya, and others have, for example, sharply challenged long-cherished presumptions that the fourteenth century marked the advent of a new age of infantry supremacy or a shift to reliance on bladed weapons. Their most compelling evidence on this point comes from analyses of statistics on wounds, compiled from fourteenth-century battle reports, which indicate that somewhere between 73 and 87 percent of the casualties were inflicted by arrows.[39]

Karl Friday argues that this persistence of old tactical paradigms reflects the survival of key socio-cultural imperatives, including the *bushi*'s identity and self-image as professional warriors, and their continued belief in the existence of a centralized, national power structure. These, he contends, kept notions of legitimate usage of military force bound to concepts of law enforcement and service to public authority, and mitigated against fundamental changes to definitions of military success. That is, both sides in the Nanbokuchō wars claimed nationwide jurisdiction, and the strategic objectives of warfare continued to focus on the elimination of enemy forces, not the control of territory. Together, these ideological constructs stayed warriors from fully exploring the possibilities being opened by advances in weapons technology and military organization.[40]

While historians continue to debate whether or not the Genpei and Nanbokuchō wars brought about epoch-making transfigurations of warfare, all agree that significant innovations in weaponry and military organization were introduced during and between both conflicts.[41] With regard to the latter, Thomas Conlan cites the ongoing "state of war" that persisted for nearly three-quarters of the fourteenth century as the cause of broader institutional evolution. Although, he says, the battles of the period appear, in the main, to have involved smaller numbers of troops than those of the late twelfth century, fighting was general and endemic throughout most of this sixty-year span, with battles fought in every region, engaging warriors from every province in the country. The need to prosecute this enduring conflict, Conlan argues, translated into an imperative toward enhanced ability to control and extract surplus from the countryside, in order to better raise, equip, feed, transport, and direct soldiers and armies. Over time, he contends, provincial warrior leaders were able to expand ostensibly temporary commissariat rights and powers into a more comprehensive local political authority than had existed in Japan since the advent of the *ritsuryō* state at the turn of the seventh century.[42]

Later medieval warfare

By the early fifteenth century, warriors had adopted new types of polearms, stronger bows that could shoot accurately at much greater range, and new kinds of armor that allowed greater freedom of movement to cavalry and infantrymen alike. These developments presaged important changes in the conduct of war: late medieval battlefields were dominated by foot soldiers maneuvering in cohesive formations.

For most of the twentieth century, historians attributed this transformation directly to the development of new weaponry. Satō Shin'ichi and Amino Yoshihiko, as we have already noted, contended that the appearance of the *yari* enabled infantrymen to supplant mounted archers during the fourteenth century. Even more emphasis has, however, been placed on the adoption of firearms, particularly the Portuguese harquebus, introduced in the 1540s.

The long-prevailing view, especially among Western historians, was introduced by Delmer Brown in 1948. Brown maintained that Japanese warfare prior to the 1540s had been characterized by hand-to-hand combat among warriors fighting mainly as individuals, but that the adoption and rapid diffusion of firearms sparked a hasty shift from close combat to long-range fighting, wherein musket fire determined the outcome of most battles before the opposing armies came into direct contact. This, he said, led to the fielding of much larger armies composed largely of peasant draftees, the almost complete disappearance of cavalry, increased reliance on castles and field fortifications, and a revolution in castle construction. In combination, these developments stimulated industrial and commercial activity and led to the growth of castle towns—both key components of the transformation to early modern Japan.[43]

Brown's views closely paralleled those of Michael Roberts and other historians of Europe with regard to the notion of a military revolution that ended the medieval world and helped create the early modern age. Although it has generated considerable critical rebuttal over the years, this theory has maintained an enduring hold on historians' imaginations, as applied to both Europe and Japan.[44] Most recently, Matthew Stavros averred that the introduction of firearms to Japan launched a late sixteenth-century military revolution that closely paralleled contemporary developments in Europe, with similar consequences for social and political transformation.[45]

Perhaps the most intriguing speculation concerning the effects of firearms on Japanese military evolution linked their introduction to an enhanced role for the sword. This thesis, advanced by Tominaga Kengo, Imamura Yoshio, Nakabayashi Shinji, and other historians focusing on the development of *kendō* (fencing) and other martial arts, argued that firearms rendered even the heaviest of armors superfluous, leading to a switch to lighter armors, which increased both the wearer's speed and agility, as well as his vulnerability to sword strikes. Guns were further said to have induced opposing hosts to close with one another as rapidly as possible, which, in combination with the enormous armies of the period, made late sixteenth-century battlefields more crowded, and thereby forced combatants to engage at closer quarters than ever before. This, went the argument, boosted the appeal of swords over larger weapons like spears and *naginata*, which required more space to wield effectively.[46]

The 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s, however, witnessed a boom in revisionist scholarship on sixteenth-century warfare. Among the most important constructs to come under fire were long-cherished ideas about the role and effect of the introduction of firearms. These attacks have come from two directions.

One group of historians, including Fujiki Hisashi, Fujimoto Masayuki, Nawa Yumio, Suzuki Masaya, and Udagawa Takehisa, have analyzed casualty reports, pictorial records, and archeological data to reconstruct late medieval tactics. This evidence, they conclude, indicates little or no change in the ratio of wounds caused by bladed weapons to those caused by missile weapons after the spread of firearms, as well as a pattern of gradual change in tactics and military organization stretching across the sixteenth century. Their revised view, then, contends that guns did not revolutionize Japanese warfare—gunners simply supplanted archers within an already ongoing tactical and structural evolution—and that hand-to-hand combat with bladed weapons (*hakuhei-sen*) did not play a pivotal role in battles.[47]

Partly in response to these discoveries, a second group of scholars have reexamined the question of when and why late medieval commanders began to adopt new tactical paradigms. Most point to the late fifteenth century as a turning point. But the real catalyst to change, they argue, was political, not technological, development. Stephen Morillo, Thomas Conlan and Karl Friday link changes in the composition of armies and the conduct of battles to developments in political power and legitimation, administration, taxation, and social structure.[48]

Morillo notes that both developments, and the key military changes that marked the late medieval era, began well before the introduction of Portuguese firearms in 1543 and continued along virtually the same trajectory before and after that date. The key issue, he argues, was not the appearance of guns or any other new weapon, but rather the emergence of a level and extent of political control that made large infantry forces a viable—and then an attractive—alternative to elite warriors on horseback.

Cavalry, he observes, can be effective in relatively small numbers, while on open ground, infantry can stand against charging horsemen only when it can form up with sufficient density and depth to force horses to refuse to collide with it, and only when it has sufficient morale and courage to stand and face the terrifying charge. This, says Morillo, requires that infantry units have both ample numbers and enough practice and experience fighting together to be able to trust their fellows to stand with them, rather than break and run. Effective infantry can, therefore, be deployed only by a command authority strong enough to gather sufficient troops, and rich enough to maintain them while they train or fight together long enough to develop the needed unit cohesion. Early medieval Japanese commanders, he says, lacked the wherewithal to accomplish this, but by the *sengoku* era, they had acquired the political and economic resources necessary to draft and drill large units of infantry. At this point, infantry became more cost-effective than cavalry, with ensuing consequences for the composition of armies and the manner in which battles and campaigns were waged.[49]

A decade later, Conlan expanded on Morillo's argument. Surviving records, he notes, reveal little or no modification of battle tactics during the period between the Nanbokuchō wars and the outbreak of the Ōnin War in 1467. Nevertheless, enhanced ability to collect revenue and more integrated political control over vassal warriors equipped emerging lords with semi-permanent armies that were—potentially—capable of functioning as cohesive units on the battlefield. Then, Conlan asserts, the tactical stalemate that ensued after the opening clashes of the Ōnin War led commanders to the (almost accidental) discovery that well-disciplined infantry equipped with spears could readily hold their ground against horsemen. Henceforth, the roles of cavalry and foot soldiers became reversed, with mounted warriors increasingly relegated to scouting, raids on supply lines, and support of infantry formations, which now served as the mainstay of military forces.

Similarly, he relates, firearms in and of themselves brought no revolutionary changes to Japanese warfare. They had, in fact, been introduced to Japan, from China via the Ryūkyū islands, as early as 1466, and records of their use in battle date back to at least the 1520s, although they did not really catch on until the arrival of the Portuguese harquebus in the 1540s. Even then, he contends, their diffusion was gradual and their influence on the nature of battles minimal, largely because while they offered marginally better range and stopping power over arrows, they were both expensive and insufficient (on their own) to break charges by horsemen or spear-wielding foot soldiers. The primary contribution of firearms, he concludes, was to give *daimyō* who could afford them—principally those in western Japan and the capital region—a slight advantage over less wealthy eastern rivals.[50]

Friday emphasizes changing strategic objectives, brought about by the steady devolution of political power from the capital to the countryside, as the impetus for tactical evolution. Throughout the early medieval era, he contends, the central objectives of warfare remained human, rather than geographic: in function, Heian and Kamakura warriors were more constables or sheriffs than soldiers or warlords. But the *daimyō* of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries ruled nearly autonomous satrapies whose borders coincided with the area that they—and the lesser warriors whose loyalties they commanded—could dominate by force. This dramatic change in political circumstance, he argues, drove a shift in the underlying purpose of war, as the

primary objective of warfare became the capture or defense of territory. Faced with a new strategic imperative to capture or defend specific geographic areas (and armed with a growing ability to drill and discipline troops and therefore to field versatile, articulated armies), Japanese commanders reshaped their tactics around companies of archers—and later gunners—on foot, utilized to break enemy formations, which could then be chased from the field by spearmen.[51]

The road forward

This chapter has introduced the main directions and trends in research concerning the origins of the *bushi*, the beginnings of warrior rule, and the conduct of warfare. In recent decades, historians have overturned a number of the constituent parts of what was once the received wisdom concerning warriors and warfare in medieval Japan. In particular, they have ceased to view the appearance of warriors as a function of economic developments and the evolution of the classical state's landholding system, and are instead searching for explanations that emphasize the *bushi*'s essential function as military specialists. And they have turned from simplistic themes like a supposed shift from combat centered on mounted archery to hand-to-hand combat with bladed weapons, or from one-on-one duels between horsemen to fighting between companies of infantry, and are now instead focusing on (changes in) the integration of cavalry and foot soldiers, and the evolving face of war as whole. That is, rather than analyzing single pieces of battles, they are now looking at the evolution of warfare and the composition of armies in the context of broad political and social change.

Nevertheless, the substantive re-evaluation of medieval warfare and military forces that began in the 1990s remains a work in progress. Historians working on these questions have yet to achieve a new consensus on many key points. There are also numerous topics that cry out for attention, if we are to achieve a comprehensive understanding of medieval warfare.

Medieval warlords must, for example, have faced numerous political and administrative problems in the wake of victorious campaigns, including the means by which they reconstructed battle sites in the aftermath of fighting, the ways in which they provided for wounded survivors and the families of those killed, the measures they took to absolve enemy forces and cut off the cycle of revenge and retaliation, and other similar political problems. Military training—the means by which medieval combatants learned to fight—remains another important, yet mostly unexplored subject. Henceforth, historians also need to look more carefully at the activities of non-combatant, logistical-support troops conscripted from the farming population for tasks such as transport of provisions and the building and razing of fortifications. Naval warfare remains another under-explored topic.[52] And, most importantly, there is a need for more thorough amalgamation and integration of discoveries concerning nuts and bolts subjects like weapons technology, strategy and tactics, and the face of battle with assessments of broader political and socio-economic evolution.

Notes

1 Uwayokote Masataka, "Heian chūki no keisatsu seido."
2 Hara Katsurō, *Nihon chūsei shi* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1906; rpt. 1969). Hara's ideas were echoed by Asakawa Kan'ichi, who was publishing at nearly the same time, albeit in English. See "The Origin of Feudal Land Tenure in Japan" originally published in 1914; or "The Founding of the Kamakura Shogunate by Minamoto-no-Yoritomo" (1933).
3 Ishimoda Shō, *Chūseiteki sekai no keisei*, originally published in 1946; *Kodai makki no seiji katei oyobi seiji keitai*, originally published in 1950.
4 Important examples of this view of warrior origins include Yasuda Motohisa, *Bushi sekai no jomaku*, and Takeuchi Rizō, *Bushi no tōjō*. For examples in English, see George Sansom, *A History of Japan to 1334*,

99–263; Minoru Shinoda, *The Founding of the Kamakura Shogunate, 1180–1185*, 13–144; and Takeuchi Rizō, "The Rise of Warriors."

5 Key expressions of this new vision of the Heian polity in English include John W. Hall, *Government and Local Power in Japan, 500–1700: A Study Based on Bizen Province*; Cornelius J. Kiley, "Estate and Property in the Late Heian Period," and "The Imperial Court as a Legal Authority in the Kamakura Age"; G. Cameron Hurst, III, *Insei: Abdicated Sovereigns in the Politics of Late Heian Japan 1086–1185*, and "The Kōbu Polity: Court-Bakufu Relations in Kamakura Japan"; Peter Arnesen, "The Struggle for Lordship in Late Heian Japan: The Case of Aki"; and Jeffrey P. Mass, *Warrior Government in Early Medieval Japan: A Study of the Kamakura Bakufu, Shugo and Jitō*, and *The Development of Kamakura Rule 1180–1250: A History with Documents*.

6 Toda Yoshimi, "Bushidan no seichō"; Hall, *Government and Local Power*, 129–142; Satō Shin'ichi, *Nihon no rekishi 9: Nanbokuchō no dōran*.

7 Toda Yoshimi, "Kokuga gunsei no keisei katei," and "Kokuga gunsei no keisei josetsu"; Ishii Susumu, "Chūsei seiritsu-ki gunsei kenkyū no ichi shiten," "Insei-ki no kokuga gunsei," "Chūsei seiritsu-ki no gunsei," and *Chūsei bushidan*; Fukuda Toyohiko, "Ōchō gunji kikō to nairan"; Shimomukai Tatsuhiko, "Ōchō kokka kokuga gunsei no seiritsu," "Ōchō kokka kokuga gunsei no kōzō to tenkai," "Kokuga to bushi," and "Ōryōshi, tsuibushi no shoruikei"; Inoue Mitsuo, "Kebiishi no seiritsu to sekkan seiji," "Ōryōshi no kenkyū," "Heian jidai no tsuibushi," "Insei seiken no gunjiteki hensei," and *Heian jidai no gunji seido no kenkyū*; Morita Tei, "Kebiishi ni tsuite," "Kebiishi no kenkyū," "Kebiishi seiritsu no zentei," "Heian zenki o chūshin to shita kizoku no shiteki buryoku ni tsuite," "Heian chūki kebiishi ni tsuite no oboegaki," and "Heian zenki tōgoku no gunji mondai ni tsuite"; Uwayokote, "Heian chūki no keisatsu seido"; Horiuchi Kazuaki, "Heian chūki no kebiishi no buryoku ni tsuite"; Satō Shin'ichi, *Nihon no chūsei kokka*; Takayama Kaoru, "Shirakawa insei-ki ni okeru kebiishi no ichisokumen: bunin jōkyō kara mite"; Shirakawa Tetsurō, "Heishi ni yoru kebiishi chō shōaku ni tsuite." Key studies on the *ritsuryō* military system include Naoki Kōjirō, *Nihon kodai heiseishi no kenkyū*; Sasayama Haruo, *Kodai kokka to guntai*; Noda Reishi, *Ritsuryō kokka no gunjisei*; and Hashimoto Yū, *Ritsuryō gundansei no kenkyū*.

8 Karl Friday, *Hired Swords: The Rise of Private Warrior Power in Early Japan*. This argument was initially laid out in "Teeth and Claws: Provincial Warriors and the Heian Court," and in Friday's 1989 dissertation.

9 William Wayne Farris, *Heavenly Warriors: The Evolution of Japan's Military, 500–1300*.

10 Takahashi Masaaki, *Bushi no seiritsu: bushizō no sōshutsu*. It is worth noting that Takahashi saw his views as harking back to those of Kume Kunitake (see *Kume Kunitake chosakushū*, vol. 2 of *Nihon kodai chūsei shi no kenkyū*), although he maintains that he did not become aware of Kume's work until he had already reached similar conclusions independently. Kondō Yoshikazu (*Chūsei-teki bugu no seiritsu to bushi*), like Takahashi, began with an exhaustive study of arms, armor, and military tactics, and arrived at very similar conclusions concerning the origins of the *bushi*. His principal point of disagreement with Takahashi is over the role and meaning of the bow and arrow among court military officers. Takahashi maintains that bows were largely symbolic weapons, while Kondō argues that they were valued first and foremost for practical military purposes.

11 Takahashi, *Bushi no seiritsu*, 13–20, 130–134.

12 Shimomukai Tatsuhiko, *Bushi no seiritsu to insei*, 101–102. For studies of the Taira Masakado insurrection in English, see Karl Friday, *The First Samurai: The Life and Legend of the Warrior Rebel, Taira Masakado*; Farris, *Heavenly Warriors*, 131–162; Judith Rabinovitch, *Shōmonki: The Story of Masakado's Rebellion*; or Giuliana Stramigioli, "Preliminary Notes on the Masakadoki and Taira no Masakado Story," or "Masakadoki."

13 The term Genji derives from the Sino-Japanese reading of the surname Minamoto. The Seiwa Genji, then, were the Minamoto line that claimed descent from emperor Seiwa (r. 858–876). Similarly, Heishi comes from the Sino-Japanese reading of the surname Taira. The Kanmu Heishi were branches of Taira claiming descent from Emperor Kanmu (r. 781–806). The Hidesato-*ryū* Fujiwara ("the line to which Hidesato belonged") were a group of warrior houses descended from Fujiwara Uona (721–783).

14 Motoki Yasuo, *Bushi no seiritsu*; Shimomukai, *Bushi no seiritsu to insei*; Kawajiri Akio, "Bumon no keisei."

15 Ishimoda, *Chūseiteki sekai no keisei*, and *Kodai makki no seiji katei oyobi seiji keitai*; Nagahara Keiji, *Nihon hōkensei seiritsu katei no kenkyū*. For more on *shōen*, see Chapters 9 and 10 of this volume.

16 See, for example, Toda Yoshimi, "Chūsei hōkensei no seiritsu katei." Western historians of Japan have grown distrustful of the construct of "feudalism" itself and its utility for conceptualizing premodern Japan—owing, in almost equal measure, to difficulties inherent in the construct itself, and from a

sensitivity to the fundamental differences between historical evolution in medieval Japan and Europe. See the discussion of this point in Chapter 7 of this volume.

17 Irumada Nobuo, "Shugo・jitō to ryōshusei."

18 Mass, *Warrior Government in Early Medieval Japan*. Mass later refined his argument in *Yoritomo and the Founding of the First Bakufu: The Origins of Dual Government in Japan*.

19 The basis for this belief is three entries in *Azuma kagami*, from 1185 11/12, 11/28, and 12/6.

20 Kawai Yasushi, *Kamakura bakufu seiritsushi no kenkyū* and *Genpei kassen no kyozō o hagu*.

21 See, for example, Matsunaga Kazuhiro, *Muromachi-ki kōbu kankei to Nanbokuchō nairan*; Andrew Goble, *Kenmu: Go-Daigo's Revolution*; Thomas Conlan, *State of War: The Violent Order of Fourteenth Century Japan*; and Karl Friday, *Samurai, Warfare and the State in Early Medieval Japan*.

22 See, for example, Hasegawa Tadashi, "The Early Stages of the Heike Monogatari"; Kenneth Butler, "The Textual Evolution of the *Heike Monogatari*," "The *Heike Monogatari* and the Japanese Warrior Ethic," and "The Heike Monogatari and Theories of Oral Epic Literature." Butler argues that the *biwa-hōshi* produced many of their embellishments and much of the detail of the now-familiar tales by manipulating stereotyped themes and formulae common to oral tale composition all over the world.

23 Kawai Yasushi, "Chūsei bushi no bugei to sensō: Genpei kassen o chūshin ni"; "Jishō・Juei no sensō to *Heike monogatari*"; Takahashi, *Bushi no seiritsu*, 1–66. Historians have, in fact, been commenting on the latter problem for generations. In his famous 1891 essay "*Taiheiki* wa shigaku ni eki nashi" (originally published in 1891), Kume Kunitake, for example, offered several illustrations of this sort of scientific error in *Taiheiki*, a chronicle of the Nanbokuchō wars.

24 Kuroda Hideo, *Nazo toki Nihon shi: kaiga shiryō o yomu*, provides an easily accessible introduction to *emaki*.

25 Gomi Fumihiko, *Azuma kagami no hōhō: jijitsu to shinwa ni miru chūsei*, offers an extensive analysis of *Azuma kagami*'s value as a historical source.

26 Kaizu Ichirō, "Kassen teoi chūmon no seiritsu"; Urushihara Tōru, "Gunchūjō ni kansuru jakkan no kōsatsu"; Kudō Keiichi, "Chakutōjō・gunchūjō no seiritsu jōken oboegaki"; Thomas Conlan, *State of War*.

27 See, for example, Mikoso Hane, *Premodern Japan: A Historical Survey*, 73–74; Stephen R. Turnbull, *The Book of the Samurai: The Warrior Class of Japan*, 19, 22–36; Turnbull, *The Lone Samurai and the Martial Arts*, 14–28; John Newman, *Bushido: The Way of the Warrior*, 13–14, 16–17.

28 Ishii Shirō, *Nihonjin no kokka seikatsu*, 14–24; Eiko Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*, 97–103. Other recent or important examples of scholarship depicting early medieval warfare as ritualized include: Nishimata Fusao, "Kassen no rūru to manā"; Okada Seiichi, "Kassen to girei"; Seki Yukihiko, "'Bu' no kōgen: katchū to yumiya"; Takahashi, *Bushi no seiritsu*; and H. Paul Varley, *Warriors of Japan as Portrayed in the War Tales*. Among the most intriguing analyses here is Farris's (*Heavenly Warriors*, 8–9) application of extrapolations from socio-biology and anthropology to early medieval Japanese battlefields, which likened early *bushi* warfare to the intraspecific combat of stags and rams contesting with rivals over mates, or wolves sparring to secure dominance within their packs.

29 Toda, "Kokuga gunsei no keisei katei"; Morita Tei, "Kodai sento ni tsuite"; and Inoue, *Heian jidai no gunji seido*. Sasaki Minoru, "Tetsu to Nihon-tō," and "Nihon-tō to ōyoroi no seiritsu katei: kinzoku kōkogakuteki tachiba kara no kōsatsu"; Seki, "'Bu' no kōgen"; Fukuda Toyohiko, "Rekishi kara mita Nishinotani iseki no igi"; Sakamoto Akira, "Tōgoku bushi no sōbi kōjō o horu"; Fujimoto Masayuki, *Yoroi o matou hitobito*, "Bugu to kassen no henbō," "Bugu to rekishi I: tate," "Bugu to rekishi II: yumiya," and "Bugu to rekishi III: katchū"; Mori Toshio, "Yumi no iryoku" and "Yumi no hattatsu"; Toyoda Aritsune and Nomura Shin'ichi, *Yoshitsune kiba gundan*; Kondō Yoshikazu, *Yumiya to tōken: chūsei kassen no jitsuzō* and *Chūsei-teki bugu no seiritsu to bushi*.

30 Key publications here include Kawai, *Genpei kassen no kyozō o hagu*, *Genpei no nairan to kōbu seiken*, and *Kamakura bakufu seiritsushi no kenkyū*; Takahashi Masaaki, *Bushi no seiritsu*; Noguchi Minoru, "Kokka to buryoku: chūsei ni okeru bushi・buryoku," *Buke no tōryō no jōken: chūsei bushi o minaosu*, "Bandō bushi to uma," and "Ikusa to girei"; Gomi Fumihiko, *Bushi to bunshi no chūseishi*, and *Sesshō to shinkō: bushi o saguru*; Suzuki Keizō, *Kassen emaki* Thomas Conlan, *State of War*; Karl Friday, *Samurai, Warfare and the State*.

31 See, for example, Hashiguchi Sadashi, "Chūsei hōkeikan o meguru shomondai" and "Hōkeikan wa ika ni seiritsu suru no ka"; Kawai, "Jishō・Juei no 'sensō' to Kamakura bakufu" and *Genpei kassen no kyozō o hagu*; and Nakazawa Katsuaki, "Chūsei jōkaku-shi shiron," "Kūkan to shite no 'jōkaku' to sono tenkai," and *Chūsei no buryoku to jōkaku*.

32 Takahashi Masaaki is among the most recent proponents of the belief that early *bushi* were attended on the battlefield by grooms, who otherwise took no direct part in the fighting. Arguing that such attendants were necessary because Japanese ponies were wild, mean, and very difficult to control, he maintains that two grooms, called "*kuchi-tori*," were normally assigned to each rider, jogging along beside him and holding the reins of his mount while he shot his bow (see Takahashi, *Bushi no seiritsu*, 234–238). No such grooms appear, however, in any illustrations of early medieval battles.

33 Ishii Susumu, *Kamakura bakufu*. Ishii's conclusions rapidly became the received wisdom on this issue, and remained so until the 1990s, when they came under fire from multiple fronts. See, for example, Nishimata, "Kassen no rūru to manā," or Abe Takeshi, *Kamakura bushi no sekai*.

34 Satō, *Nanbokuchō no dōran*; Amino Yoshihiko, *Mōko shūrai*. Satō's and Amino's positions have been restated repeatedly by subsequent scholars. See, for example, Seki Yukihiko, "'Bu' no kōgen," or "Busō." Popular literature, intriguingly, often equates the Mongol experience even more directly with the development of swords and swordsmanship on the battlefield. See, for example, I. Bottomly and A.P. Hopson, *Arms and Armour of the Samurai: The History of Weaponry in Ancient Japan*, 49; Gregory Irvine, *The Japanese Sword: The Soul of the Samurai*, 36–38; Clive Sinclaire, *Samurai: The Weapons and Spirit of the Japanese Warrior*, 45.

35 Appraising the numbers of troops involved in any given battle is, of course, an exceedingly wooly task. Few records specify the size of forces, different accounts sometimes give vastly different numbers for the same armies and battles, and even prosaic sources like personal diaries are prone to overestimation (and sometimes to understatement as well). Nevertheless, as Hans Delbrück (*Warfare in Antiquity*, 34–35; Delbrück, *The Barbarian Invasions*, 227) has noted, commanders or observers compiling battle reports at or very close to the time of the events recounted could not offer up numbers so distorted that contemporaries would immediately have recognized them as such. Within these limitations, then, it does seem possible to reckon the scale of forces with enough precision to support the conclusion that the battles and armies of the Genpei War were considerably larger than anything experienced in earlier *bushi* conflicts. Not all historians, however, concur that Genpei armies were larger than previous ones. For a dissenting view, arguing that the warfare of the 1180s did not involve significantly greater numbers of troops than had earlier battles, see Farris, *Heavenly Warriors*, *passim*.

36 Kawai, "Jishō・Juei no 'sensō,'" 64–65, and *Genpei kassen*, 60–67.

37 Kondō, *Yumiya to tōken*; Abe, *Kamakura bushi no sekai*, 204–211.

38 Okada, "Kassen to girei."; Futaki Ken'ichi, *Chūsei buke no sahō*, 40–66; Imai Shōnosuke, "Kassen no kikō."

39 Conlan, *State of War*, 53–72; Suzuki Masaya, *Katana to kubi-tori: sengoku kassen isetsu*, 78–80; Shakadō Mitsuhiro, "Nanbokuchō ki kassen ni okeru senshō."

40 Friday, *Samurai, Warfare and the State*.

41 The most extensive work on the former has been done by Kondō Yoshikazu whose 2000 *Chūsei-teki bugu no seiritsu to bushi* represents the most comprehensive study on the subject to date.

42 Conlan, *State of War*, especially 83–164.

43 Delmer M. Brown, "The Impact of Firearms on Japanese Warfare, 1543–98." In 1963, George Sansom (*A History of Japan, 1334–1615*) took Brown's last point even further, declaring that the military successes of Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu that produced the reunification of Japan would not have been possible without the introduction of guns.

44 Michael Roberts, "The Military Revolution, 1560–1660"; Jeremy Black, *European Warfare, 1453–1815*; Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800*; Clifford J. Rogers, *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*. For a summary of issues typically raised in rebuttal to the military revolution thesis, see Bert Hall and Kelly DeVries, "Essay Review—The 'Military Revolution' Revisited."

45 Matthew Stavros, "Military Revolution in Early Modern Japan."

46 Tominaga Kengo, *Kendō gohyakunen-shi*, 47–53; Imamura Yoshio, "Budōshi gaisetsu," 8–10; Nakabayashi Shinji, "Kendō shi," 38–39; Kiyota Minoru, *Kendō: Its Philosophy, History and Means to Personal Growth*, 40–43; G. Cameron Hurst, III, *Armed Martial Arts of Japan: Swordsmanship and Archery*, 38–41.

47 Fujiki Hisashi, *Toyotomi heiwarei to sengoku shakai*, *Sengoku no sahō*, *Kiga to sensō sengoku ō iku*, and *Zōhyō-tachi no senjō*; Fujimoto Masayuki, *Sengoku kassen no jōshiki ga wakaru hon*, and *Nobunaga no sensō*; Nawa Yumio, *Nagashino・Shitaragahara kassen no shinjitsu*; Udagawa Takehisa, *Teppō to sengoku kassen*; Suzuki Masaya, *Teppō to Nihonjin: "teppō shinwa" ga kakushite kita koto*, *Teppōtai to kiba gundan*, *Sengoku kassen no kyojitsu*, and *Sentō hōkokusho ga kataru Nihon chūsei no senjō: Kamakura saimakki kara Edo shoki made*. See also the articles in Udagawa Takehisa, *Teppō denrai no Nihonshi*.

48 Peter Lorge also rejects the assertion that firearms drove political change, rather than the other way around. See *The Asian Military Revolution: From Gunpowder to the Bomb*, 45–65.
49 Stephen Morillo, "Guns and Government: A Comparative Study of Europe and Japan."
50 Thomas D. Conlan, "Instruments of Change: Organizational Technology and the Consolidation of Regional Power in Japan, 1333–1600," and *Weapons and Fighting Techniques of the Samurai Warrior, 1200–1877*, 142–179.
51 Friday, "Kisha no ayumi no ichikōsatsu: chūsei Nihon ni okeru kokka to bunka to gijutsu."
52 The most comprehensive treatment of naval warfare to date in English is Peter Shapinky's *Lords of the Sea: Pirates, Violence, and Commerce in Late Medieval Japan*.

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21
Religion in medieval Japan

Brian Ruppert

There are at least three issues to consider before endeavoring to study religion in the medieval Japanese isles, beginning with the matter of what to call it. One scholar has recently argued that the term "religion" (*shūkyō* in modern Japanese), should not be used in reference to Japan prior to the Meiji restoration (1868).[1] Some kind of terminology must, however, be used to convey the broad set of beliefs and practices in premodern Japan, and most scholars studying premodern Japan continue to use the term since there are few useful alternatives. Moreover, a practice of using the original Japanese terminology without translation would unduly limit the readership to those students of history who have undertaken advanced study of the Japanese language.

The periodization of "medieval" religion is also the subject of ongoing debate in academic circles. In the postwar period, scholars often identified medieval religion directly with the historical development of the Kamakura shogunate and the presumed "advent" of "Kamakura new Buddhism" that changed the religious landscape. Inoue Mitsusada, in particular, took the view that a clear line could be drawn between "old" Buddhism, marked by elitist paths to enlightenment and the interests of those at the top of the social hierarchy, on the one end, and "new" Buddhism, marked by simplified paths to enlightenment open to the masses, on the other.[2] On the other hand, Kuroda Toshio's work and that of Taira Masayuki have been especially influential in calling such views into question, highlighting the institutional centrality of the eso-exoteric Buddhism system (*kenmitsu taisei*) throughout the medieval era, arguing that "Kamakura new Buddhism" on the whole gained an equal institutional footing only in the sixteenth century.[3] Given these trends, for the purposes of this volume and this chapter I have decided to focus on the twelfth to sixteenth centuries.

It is also important to recognize, initially, the extensive corpus of medieval materials that remains in manuscript form; the number of unprinted works of the temples is particularly great in Japan. Thus, on the one hand, scholars have extensive knowledge about the religious life of the court, inasmuch as a large proportion of extant court journals have already been printed and thus are available for research; but on the other, their knowledge of the religious life in the shrine-temple complexes remains woefully incomplete.[4]

Early medieval considerations: an era of belief and disbelief

Over the past two decades, scholars have increasingly noted that by the early medieval era concern over Buddhist "merit" was directly related to aristocrats' preoccupation with ritual and related writing practices, as well as the advent of varying degrees of rule by retired sovereigns. Aristocratic families specializing in knowledge of court ritual began the systematic writing of journals (*nikki*, *guchūreki*). Historians Matsuzono Hitoshi and Kamikawa Michio have argued that journals inscribed by members of clans such as the Northern House Fujiwara and those associated with Kajūji reflect an aristocratic society in which possession of ritual knowledge was concomitant to both acquisition of social standing and the resolution of an array of problems through ritual patronage. In some cases, such families administered religious institutions, as can be seen in the case of prominent figures like the early influential Shingon monk Kanjin (1074–1153) of the Kajūji-ryū Fujiwara clan at Kajūji temple to the southeast of Heian-kyō. In other cases, a royal such as the powerful prince-monk Shukaku (1150–1202) is known for writing journals (*hinami ki*) on behalf of his administration within Ninnaji and also on behalf of his family.[5]

For both lay and monastic believers, scripture-copying was an especially common mode of acquiring merit. Rites for copying the Buddhist canon or otherwise completing the canon became prominent, but meanwhile scriptural copying or inscription in general took on new and even more explosive features. We can draw attention to just a few of these, bearing in mind that there were multiple variations on scripture-copying in the era, including large bodies of works copied in a single person's hand (e.g., *ippitsu issaikyō*) and the kinds we note below. Kamikawa Michio has also recently noted the connection of such practices to the influence of the East Asian concept of the Latter Age of the Dharma (J. *mappō*; Ch. *mofa*), and suggested that it promoted the notion of a religious commonality between Japan, with its established Kenmitsu Buddhists, and the East Asian world, thereby representing the deepening of—and promotion of—the Kenmitsu system.[6]

At the same time, a series of scholars have come to suggest that the medieval era might also be described as one of rising disbelief among the populace. Such "disbelief," however, in fact suggests belief of a particular kind—one that might be interpreted in both religious and legal terms. A hallmark of religious works as well as written materials of a broad range of genres of the period was the effort to legitimate written content—claims or, say, prayers—either by means of making an oath or otherwise guaranteeing that the manuscript was written in the original hand of the writer or, at least, based on his original hand. The oath, most commonly referred to as *kishōmon*, testified before the *kami*, Buddhas, and other sacral powers that the person making a prayer was truthful (the *seiyaku* promise in the so-called former half, *maegaki*) in his or her claims or intentions and requested punishment should that not be the case (i.e, the second half, called the *shinmon*). Satō Hiroo, in particular, has studied these oaths in great detail and argues that these manuscripts come closest to representing a kind of "shared world-view of medieval Japanese" across classes and, hence, beyond the limitations of discourses of "elite" thinkers such as famous monks like Dōgen or Shinran.[7]

Institutional religion: Kenmitsu Buddhism, the geographical and social advent of Kamakura Buddhism, and Kami-Buddha combinatory discourse

The interaction between lay patrons and those in monasteries increased greatly with the northern Fujiwara clan's rise to eminence at court, but the court's broader turn to more feverish support of esoteric Buddhist practice came with the retired sovereigns' establishment of the Dharma prince system of monastic status and patronage of increasingly numerous Buddhist lineages

within established schools in the twelfth century.[8] In the eso-exoteric established complexes, what we can call the monasteries of Kenmitsu Buddhism, "esoteric Buddhism" (*mikkyō*) referred to forms of Buddhism in which the teachings were disseminated through the principle of secret transmission from master to disciple; in both the Shingon school specializing in esotericism and within the esoteric wing of Tendai Buddhism, the main object of veneration was ultimately the Sun Buddha Dainichi, and enlightenment was seen as realized through a combination of the proper ritual activation of the disciple's body, speech, and mind to evoke and unite with Dainichi, typically in the form of one of his manifestations ("traces"), which could be another Buddha, Bodhisattva, or even deity (*kami*). Kuroda Toshio argued for the dominance of esoteric Buddhist teaching and practices within the Kenmitsu temples in the medieval era, but more recently leading scholars of Buddhist studies such as Sueki Fumihiko and Jacqueline Stone have stressed what they see as the comparative centrality of the exoteric (*kengyō*) lineages, which focused on scriptures such as the *Lotus Sutra* as discourses seen as having been transcribed directly in the presence of the historical Buddha.[9]

The first warrior government elaborated on these features rather than making an effort to replace them. Rather than turning to the monks of Zen lineages alone—an image common in postwar academic circles—the shogunate from its earliest stages attempted to import ritual practitioners from the major Kenmitsu monastic centers of the capital region. Minamoto Yoritomo (1147–1199), from the 1180s, invited Buddhist monks and shrine officiants from the regions surrounding Kamakura to the complex he had begun to construct there, the shrine (-temple) complex Tsurugaoka Hachimangū. Both he and his military organization were primarily interested in acquiring ritual practitioners who were capable of performing rites that would benefit them such as esoteric rites (*shuhō*) and memorial offerings (*kuyō*).[10]

The most prominent monks at the time were those of the Onjōji lineage (Tendai), along with a series of monks who were of Taira background.[11] Nevertheless, the shogunal family and shogunate came to incorporate a series of lineages of Kenmitsu monasteries over time. The prominent Shingon abbot of Tsurugaoka, Jōgō (1152–1238), was the first major monk in the employ of the shogunate to return to prominent complexes in the royal-capital area, assuming the abbacy at Mount Kōya and then Tōji.[12] The shogunate had thus successfully incorporated established Kenmitsu Buddhists into its ritual life, which offered it both the ritual knowledge of exo-esoteric monks but also association with their status, given their family backgrounds and connections with the court. The success of the shogunate was consolidated by at least the 1260s, when a series of Kenmitsu monks originally trained in Kamakura itself came to great prominence even in the capital area, where they became leading abbots of major monasteries such as Onjōji.

This interweaving of court-related scions, the shogunate, and court may be related to a feature of the power-bloc system that is sometimes overlooked: the interrelationship between power-blocs, which Kuroda Toshio seems to assume but for which Mikael Bauer has offered a clearer interpretation more recently. Bauer's emphasis on monks' participation in multiple schools within and between Kenmitsu monasteries has helped scholars understand that the power-blocs at such sites were in no sense monolithic since monks retained ties to other temples, sometimes ones housing other power-blocs.[13]

Monks of warrior background were so prominent in the major complexes by the twelfth century that it comes as no surprise that monks of warrior heritage were the first to bend and, in some ways, break the tie with their traditions—the putative "founder" of Pure Land lineages (Jōdo shū), Hōnen (Genkū; 1133–1212), who was forced to descend from the Tendai center at Mount Hiei for his promotion of *nenbutsu*-only practice (*senju nenbutsu*), and the poet-monk Saigyō (1118–1190), who traveled on a level that was very rare for the period.[14]

The advent of Kamakura "new" lineages

Historians and scholars of religion maintain a series of viewpoints regarding the contexts for the appearance of the figures like Hōnen who would come to be seen as the "founders" of the lineages of "Kamakura New Buddhism" (*Kamakura shin bukkyō*). One view regarding these founders has been that of Matsuo Kenji, who argues that "new" Buddhism can be identified with those monks who wore black monastic robes, in his view to distinguish themselves from those in the established temples.[15] Taira Masayuki, in particular, has built upon Kuroda's work to claim that these lineages, with the singular exception of the Rinzai Zen lineages, did not acquire prominence comparable to that of the established lineages until the late fifteenth to sixteenth centuries—which is now the generally accepted view in academic circles.[16] At the same time, Ōtsuka Norihiro has recently argued that Taira's view statically assumes the centrality of governmental power over local manors (*shōen*) within the Kenmitsu system when in fact that system featured a series of semi-marginal figures, related urban centers, and new forms of Buddhism.[17]

The so-called founders of the "new" schools were all trained initially at the Tendai center of Mount Hiei and all ventured forth from the mountain. It is questionable, however, whether all of them saw themselves as constructing new traditions, let alone ones with a sectarian character or marked by exclusive affiliation. Most continued to include some study of a broad range of Buddhist schools and practices; the study of multiple schools and practices was typically referred to as *shoshū kengaku* ("simultaneous study of schools") in the traditional Kenmitsu complexes, and several of these so-called founders seem to have retained belief that such study was of some benefit.

A recent discovery by Abe Yasurō, Sueki Fumihiko, and their research group of a cache of previously unknown works of Yōsai (alt. Eisai; 1141–1215), known as introducer of the Rinzai Zen (Ch. Linji Chan) lineages, at Shinpukuji treasury in Nagoya has helped scholars to call into question the notion of his complete independence from the traditional schools. In particular, it is evident now that he retained important elements of Tendai esoteric Buddhism (Taimitsu) and was also a devotee of the bodhisattva Jizō.[18] Original Taimitsu works of Yōsai's, many of which he wrote prior to the construction of Kenninji, have been discovered, suggesting that he brought together teachings of esoteric Tendai, Zen (meditation), and Precepts (= monastic discipline) lineages to create a broader approach to Buddhism and even presented the Precepts more than Zen as the ideal impetus for the revival of Japanese Buddhism in his well-known work, *Kōzen gokoku ron*.[19]

Indeed, scholars have recently stressed that Yōsai himself came to be chosen for the official post of great fundraiser (*daikanjin shiki*) at Tōdaiji, which we might describe as perhaps testimony to the association of Zen-affiliated monks with precept purity but also the fact that he skillfully won patronage from the established monasteries. After Yōsai, Kenninji monks would often be chosen for the position over the course of the thirteenth century, a further reminder of Zen practitioners' connections with semi-independent "holy men" (*hijiri*) groups and related associations with purity of practice as well as the fact that they were often successful in their efforts to acquire patronage.[20] Tōfukuji (Rinzai) founder Enni Ben'en (1202–1280) was also initiated into the Sanbō'in sub-lineage of Shingon, which helped give rise to unique pairings of Zen and esoteric Buddhist lineage sometimes referred to as Zenmitsu; he even had followers from Mount Kōya.[21] Less than a century after Dōgen's introduction of Sōtō Zen lineages from China, the monk Keizan was heavily indebted to esoteric Buddhist beliefs and practices. As Bernard Faure has demonstrated, Keizan was influenced by groups indebted to the twelfth-century monk Nōnin, presumed founder of a small group of Zen practitioners sometimes called the Daruma-shū, members of which were active in the early history of the Sōtō lineages, as well as that of the monk Kakushin (1207–1298), which incorporated Shingon influence.[22] The same can be said for

the "founder" of the Jishū, Ippen (1239–1289), whose views were clearly influenced by esoteric discourse.[23]

Thus while some scholars have noted that the tendency of the leaders of the major "new" lineages to emphasize single-practice methods led them to deviate from the traditional unity of the "three learnings" (precepts, meditation, wisdom), it is clear that most of these figures retained, in varied ways, aspects of the catholic approach fostered by the established monasteries, especially Hiei's Enryakuji. As studies by Jacqueline Stone and Sueki Fumihiko have suggested, the writings of figures like Nichiren (1222–1282) and Dōgen (1200–1253), influenced by Tendai writings of the late Heian era onward, reveal a debt to discourses on the "original enlightenment" (*hongaku*) of beings, a world of discourse which had an intimate connection not just to a broad range of soteriological questions but which also was clearly related to the eventual development of late medieval "Shintō" theories that deities (*shin*, *kami*) found in the Japanese isles were actually the original ground (*honji*) of Buddhist divinities, now conceived of as their traces (*suijaku*).[24]

Figures such as these clearly shared many interests in common with a number of prominent scholar-monks of the established monasteries, such as: Myō'e (1173–1232), who was of Kegon and Shingon lineages and studied Zen under Yōsai; Sōshō (1202–1278) and Gyōnen (1240–1321), who were Kegon (Tōdaiji) monks but also active in buddhological inquiry, the Precepts, and modes of Pure Land belief and practice; Jōkei (1155–1213), the Hossō monk at Kōfukuji known for his denunciation of Hōnen's emphasis on single-practice nenbutsu but who was also devoted to the Precepts and interested in Zen; Shunjō (1166–1227), who studied the Precepts, Tendai, Shingon, and Zen; and Eison (1201–1290), both a Shingon and precepts master.[25]

Taira and others have recently called attention to the centrality of figures like Shunjō, Jōkei, Myō'e, and Eison as representative of "meditation-precepts monks" (*zenritsu sō*) who they suggest led the "reformation in Buddhism" (*bukkyō kaikaku*) during the Kamakura period rather than the so-called founders of the "new schools."[26] Ōtsuka, however, has emphasized those figures who traveled to the continent (e.g., Shunjō) and the larger influence of Song Buddhism and the discourse of the Latter Age of the Dharma (J. *mappō*) and proposed "meditation-precepts Buddhism" (*zenritsu bukkyō*), based on analysis of temple organization in Japan and the Song, as a counterpoint to the established Kenmitsu Buddhism historically.[27]

Such figures of the "new" lineages as well as those of established Buddhist institutions also took varying views of gender, and the views of scholar have undergone changes over the past decades. Until the late twentieth century, scholars such as Kasahara Kazuo maintained the view that the "new" Kamakura schools held a more positive view of women and of their potential for salvation, especially Hōnen, Shinran, Dōgen, and Nichiren. Scholars both within and without Japan have, however, since come to take a different view of the situation. Although women had indeed been prohibited from the area of sacred mountains such as Mount Kōya, Hiei, and Yoshino for centuries, many monks in the established lineages were concerned with the salvation of women, especially of members of their families such as mothers, similar to the case on the continent.[28] A series of studies by Japanese and Western scholars were published in *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, which ushered in the new century with multiple essays that further clarified the situation of gender relations in the traditional institutions, the sacred texts, and the newer lineages.[29]

Recently, Lori Meeks has demonstrated that women were extremely active in the reestablishment of nunneries and female ordination in the early medieval period, especially in the example of Hokkeji in Nara. A group of women worked together with the Precepts Lineage master Eison to revive the nunnery there. Nuns and patrons together promoted the reestablishment of the nunnery through combining the production and dissemination of legendary narratives about Hokkeji (which was first established in the Nara period), the promotion of pilgrimage to Hokkeji,

and the promotion of other popular forms of religious literature about Hokkeji. Monastic society from the mid-Heian period onward tended to treat women primarily as potential patrons, but Eison, Myō'e, and some masters in the Zen lineages—especially recently arrived Chinese Chan masters—began to treat women additionally as followers in their traditions.[30]

Meanwhile, the True Pure Land lineages (Jōdo Shinshū) from their very beginning featured clerical marriage, based on Shinran's original vision of Kannon promising to take the form of a woman to lead him to the Pure Land as his death. The wife of any priest in these lineages was referred to as *bōmori* or "temple guardian," and described as "proprietor" of the local *dōjō* site where the congregation gathered.[31] Alternative gender identities also existed in medieval Buddhism but have only recently become an object of research.[32]

Kami-Buddha discourses and practices

Scholars have long recognized that in the early medieval era, a series of figures within the developing Buddhist institutions, the court, and the warrior class increasingly reconceived the ritual and discursive relationship between Buddhas and a series of deities (*shin*, or *kami*) associated with both native and continental traditions. Attention has, however, recently been turned to the fact that the development of Kami-Buddha (*shinbutsu*) combinatory discourse seems to have occurred in connection to religious institutions rather than as an independent irruption in the religious landscape; at the same time, scholars no longer generally assume that such belief or practice was either a mark of inconsistency or corruption, on the one hand, or contrary to modernity.[33] A broad set of deities came to be associated with Buddhist temples and their divinities, in connection with Buddhist cosmological discourse that, while originally placing the *kami* as unenlightened beings in need of salvation or protectors of the Dharma, came to represent varied *kami* as local traces or emanations of specific Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,[34] among which one was Amaterasu, promoted as identical with the Buddha Dainichi since the mid-to-late eleventh century.[35]

Alan Grapard and several Japanese scholars have emphasized the importance of the royal court's developing twenty-two shrine system and its direct association with major Buddhist monasteries.[36] Figures at the major religious complexes claimed that deities at or near their sites were local traces of Buddhist divinities, especially tutelary deities like Hie Sannō (Mount Hiei) and Seiryū Gongen (Daigoji) and particularly in connection with specific practices such as rainmaking.[37] Meanwhile, texts outlining the Buddhist royal-consecration rite *sokui kanjō* and rites of the protector-monks (*gojisō*) of the sovereign incorporated the deities and their shrines into Buddhist practice. Shingon monks and others close to the court conceived of Tenshō Daijin (Amaterasu), the deity of the royal family housed at Ise, as equivalent with the highest esoteric Buddha, Dainichi Nyorai, and spawned lineages of "Ise Shintō" within religious institutions; within Tendai, similar developments promoted the deity Sannō of the Hie (alt. Hiyoshi) shrine at the foot of Mount Hiei.[38]

In the fields of Shintō studies, intellectual history, and Buddhist studies, the effort to interpret *kami* (*shin*) worship increasingly from a historical rather than theological perspective began in the early twentieth century, and became more prominent in the 1970s with the inclusion of "medieval Shintō" texts in the *Nihon shisō taikei* series reproducing works thought to influence Japanese intellectual history as well as Kuroda Toshio's argument that historical Shintō was an outgrowth of the Kenmitsu Buddhist system. No clear historical alternative has been offered to the latter view, but as Itō Satoshi has recently emphasized, his work and that of others have attempted to historicize "Shintō" while considering it within the larger framework of native practice and the development of Kami-Buddha combinatory discourse (*shinbutsu shūgō*) such as that associated

with the medieval mytho-history narratives collectively called *Chūsei Nihongi* ("medieval chronicles of Japan") in modern scholarship.[39]

Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli have drawn attention, like Japanese scholars dating to Tsuji Zennosuke, to the specific Japanese application of terminology of "origin" and "trace" (*honji suijaku*) traceable to *Lotus sutra* discussions originally, in connection with the developing notion of Kami as traces of Buddhist divinities, and highlighted the increasing use of legendary narratives of the founding of temples and shrines (*engi*) as a means to make such claims despite the absence of any direct discussions in continental scriptures such as sutras.[40]

Learning and performance, continental contexts, and the development of trans-institutional religion (vernacular religion)

There was, moreover, increasing practice among sovereigns, the court, and monks to undertake pilgrimages to the sites of this array of sacred beings. Such sites often included both *kami* and Buddha veneration, which presumably reflected the fact that the court, the temple complexes, and the warrior houses all seem to have seen *kami* and Buddhas as intimately connected and approachable at such sites, which were most commonly on or near mountains. Fujiwara Michinaga's pilgrimages undoubtedly provided an early example of a noble who undertook them, but also female authors associated with the court increasingly wrote of their travels to shrines and temples. Over the course of the late Heian period, sovereigns increasingly undertook pilgrimages to shrines, especially those with a connection with Buddhist divinities or complexes such as Kumano or with the developing twenty-two shrine system.[41]

Scholars have increasingly connected these developments with a feature of religious belief and practice which medieval texts describe as a focus on acquiring access to the "living body" (*shōjin*) of divinities and deities, especially by means of pilgrimage, which may indeed be related to what Satō Hiroo has characterized as a shift to a medieval worldview across the larger populace. This medieval worldview, connected in part to the increasing prominence of belief in the Pure Land (Jōdo) and the need for some kind of salvation from this "impure land" (*edo*) as well as that of the absolute body of the Buddha (Skt. *dharmakāya*; J. *hosshinbutsu*), incorporated the Buddhist discourse of origin-trace (*honji-suijaku*) noted above along with developing notions of an original deity (*kongen-shin*) at the root of existence, prototypically Amaterasu (Tenshō Daijin). In doing so, this cosmological framework promised salvation conceived of as ultimately internal to one's being; hence the most common Buddhist terms were Buddha-nature (*busshō*) or original enlightenment (*hongaku*) and the most prominent ones associated with deities (*shin*, *kami*) were the absolute-nature-deity (*hosshōshin*) or original-enlightenment-deity (*hongakushin*). As he has emphasized, this new notion was expressed across a wide range of visual and narrative genres, and often featured a particular historical figure or local image represented as a trace (manifestation) of the original nature.[42]

In this connection, Satō and others have called attention to the broad range of arenas in which earlier historical figures like Prince Shōtoku and Kūkai came to be seen as traces of enlightened beings and trans-lineal in character. Although Kūkai's hagiographies clearly developed in a Shingon-lineage context, the legends concerning his life as well as his reputation as a scholar and calligrapher were consolidated by the twelfth century, and the efforts of Tōji and other monasteries to promote his veneration furthered the process. The legends and visual images about Shōtoku were particularly influential in the medieval era, when veneration of the prince became broad and deep within the population.[43]

Scholars such as Hori Ichirō claimed, particularly in the postwar era, that so-called "holy ones" (*hijiri*, *shōnin*) who increasingly occupied the medieval landscape were largely independent

of the major religious institutions of their day.[44] Over the past two decades, however, a series of scholars have argued forcefully that the holy ones were typically associated with established temples or shrines.[45] Chōgen (1121–1206), mentioned earlier, was one of the best-known of the fundraising holy ones (*kanjin hijiri*) and been described as a "reclusive monk" (*tonseisō*), but actually seems to have continued to be a Shingon-lineage monk throughout his life, suggesting that his status as a *hijiri* was in no way incongruent with his Shingon affiliation.[46]

Recent scholarship has focused on the fact that there were multiple groups of peripatetic practitioners who combined physical mobility with practices of associating with other groups in a variety of settings. There were, moreover, multiple terms used to refer to them (e.g., *hijiri*, *shōnin*, *jikyōsha*, and, later, *mokujiki*, *kyakusō*). They were varied and yet united by the fact that they wove paths between institutional roles and activities that brought them to local populations around the Japanese isles. Their increasing presence, especially from the mid-thirteenth century onward, was undoubtedly propelled by the vast increase in Buddhist lineages throughout the Japanese isles. This included both the lineages sometimes referred to as Kamakura "New" Buddhism but also those rapidly expanding groups within the established institutions—the lineages and sub-lineages (all called *ryū*) of, for example, Tendai and Shingon—the numbers of which had increased rapidly beginning in the early twelfth century.[47]

A series of notable groups related to yet often distinct from the holy ones were those of the mountain ascetics (*shugenja, yamabushi*), the study of which has made great strides in recent decades partly due to archival research in established Buddhist institutions such as Daigoji.[48] Perhaps originally possessing a connection with continental hermit traditions, these groups undertook religious austerities (*tosō*) in a number of mountain ranges, especially Ōmine. By the thirteenth century, they were acting as guides for pilgrims at prominent sacred mountains such as at Kumano and Yoshino, and most were affiliated, in this early period, with the Tendai cloister Shōgo'in at Onjōji just to the east of Heian-kyō. Over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, such peripatetic practitioners seem to have become much more prominent, and major sets of lineages developed which would be generally affiliated with Onjōji and the Shingon cloister Sanbō'in at the monastery Daigoji as well, which was southeast of the capital.[49] Their ascetic practices were attempts to undertake repentance and purification through pilgrimage in specific mountains, which by at least the fourteenth century were conceived of respectively as the main mandalas of esoteric Buddhist practice or as an embodiment of the *Lotus Sutra*.[50]

Scholars have recognized over the past few decades that the established monasteries, the development of new Buddhist lineages, and the related groups of itinerant practitioners helped spawn the development of new kinds of scripture, which were referred to often as "sacred works" (*shōgyō*), although there was clearly a series of related terms, such as *goroku* (records [of Zen masters' teachings]), used in some of the new lineages. Their scriptural status is suggested, for example, by the fact that the sacred works of specific masters were transmitted in rites of initiation, not sutras, and the most sacred of such works were carried on or near the master's person and bequeathed only to his Dharma-lineage heir. In Tendai and the Nara schools, sacred works were also written to support the practice of lineages at monastic debates, as noted by Nagamura Makoto and, more recently, by Asuka Sango.[51] Japanese monks' works even on "exoteric" topics such as Buddhist logic were sometimes passed down through oral transmission (*kuden*), suggesting that the imperative to transmit sacred works transmitted even distinctions between esoteric and exoteric Buddhism.[52] Epistolary practices were particularly common among the novel lineages, and figures like the holy man Kenchi (1226–1310) of the True Pure Land lineages carried the letters of figures like Shinran to other parts of the Japanese isles—sometimes even compiling them into scriptural corpuses.[53]

The new modes of scripture and ritual practice were also intimately related to the increasing practice of ancestral-master veneration (*soshi shinkō*) within monasteries and temples throughout

the land over the course of this period. Kenchi, for example, performed the death rites for Shinran, received his relics, and would be entrusted by the shogunate with permission to reconstruct the main mausoleum at Ōtani in the early fourteenth century.[54] Such veneration, which was focused initially on multiple masters in many lineages, helped give birth to what might be called cultures of learning that while sometimes sectarian often continued to promote the study of multiple Buddhist lineages.[55] Within the major monasteries of the Kyoto and Nara, cultures of learning (*shūgaku*) and their expression in the production of scripture and the arts were most actively undertaken in the residential halls or cloisters (*inge*, *monzeki*). Recently, Ōhashi Naoyoshi and others have proposed that scholars use a concept like "temple-shrine sphere" (*jisha-ken*) to analyze these cultural formations insofar as the areas of temple-shrines featured a combination of space, mobility, and discursive activity intimately related to the development of urban society.[56]

Meanwhile, figures like the prolific literatus-monk Mujū (Zen-Esoteric, Precepts, Tendai; 1226–1312), the Shinpukuji (Shingon) founder Nōshin (1291–1353), Chikotsu Dai'e (Rinzai Zen-Esoteric; 1229–1312), Kokan Shiren (Rinzai Zen, Esoteric; 1278–1347), and Shōgei (Pure Land, Shingon, [Buddhist-] Shintō; 1341–1420) were physically mobile figures who typically studied multiple traditions and gained access, whether through copying or other means, to large scriptural treasuries across the areas between Kansai and Kantō. It is notable that a number of these figures were originally from rural or semi-rural areas—Nōshin and Dai'e were from the Ise region, while Mujū and Shōgei were from rural Kantō, for example—and that they were of varied class background. Dai'e, however, went on to become abbot of Tōfukuji, and Nōshin founded his own temple, Shinpukuji, in a rural area near present-day Nagoya, as did Mujū. Mujū and Dai'e studied under the prominent Rinzai Zen-Esoteric (*zenmitsu*) master, Enni, an influential figure noted above who had studied in China, was patronized by leading nobles and retired sovereigns, and retained relationships with the Kenmitsu lineages—symbolizing, in this fashion, the evolving and fluid character of Zen.[57]

Such interaction served in part not just to fortify learning within the monastic walls but also to spread religious belief and practice both into the complexes and out into society. This was probably related to the development of religious and other learning within the developing Zen monasteries, which had great influence on the development of a series of arts.[58] It was also presumably related to the rise of lineages of Buddhist scriptural recitation called the "Sutra-recital way" (Dokyōdō), which Shiba Kayono has established was a path of study based on *Lotus sutra* recitation competition among monks. Influenced especially by Mount Hiei, this religio-aesthetic "way" was consolidated as a distinct school of recitation in the thirteenth century as a reflection of the interaction between lay supporters and the monastic reciters, and was passed on, like other developing arts, by means of oral transmission and related texts (*kudensho*).[59] Susan Blakeley Klein has drawn attention to the development of esoteric *waka* commentaries, which developed among court literati in the thirteenth century and which employed sexual interpretations, informed by notions of original enlightenment, to explore the ritual and religious implications of Japanese poetry practice.[60]

Scholars have recently offered varying insights into Dharma assemblies (*hō'e*) as sites where monks and lay people together engaged in ritual performance and giving while disseminating stories and other knowledge about Buddhism. From the perspective of social history, Nagamura Makoto has drawn attention to the development of Dharma assemblies in the form of annual rites (*nenjū gyōji*) at major complexes such as Nara's Tōdaiji, which by the early medieval period included a series of rites of multiple lineages (e.g., Sanron, Abhidharma [Kusha], in addition to the main Kegon school) performed in varied cloisters (*inge*) therein as well as an increase in lecture-liturgies (*kō*) and clear differentiation of the classes of monks permitted to appear; moreover, he emphasizes that there were several different sponsors of such rites, including not just the

royal family and the larger temple organization (*jike*) but also the cloisters themselves as well as distinct groups of practitioner-monks (e.g., *rengyōshū*).[61]

Scholars of literary history Komine Kazuaki and Abe Yasurō have also turned to the Dharma assemblies for insights into the developing relationship between learning, performance, and the dissemination of Buddhism. Komine has proposed what he sees as a field of "Dharma-assembly literary arts" (*hō'e bungei gaku*) and sees medieval consolidation of the Dharma assembly as such a site occurring from the twelfth century onward, but he has primarily focused on case studies rather than developing an explanatory paradigm; it is to be noted, however, that he stresses that East Asian liturgical performance, recorded at Dunhuang and elsewhere, had an important influence on the development of *ganmon* petitions and, though less directly, forms such as pronouncements (*hyōbyaku*) and liturgies (*kōshiki*) written by the officiating monks.[62]

Abe has incorporated the Dharma assemblies within his proposal for a field of "religious texts study" (*shūkyo tekusuto gaku*) as modes of sacred space in which physical texts, images, and rites were activated to produce a unified religious text, arguing that the medieval amalgam of sacred works such as ritual protocols (*shidai sho*), performance, and audience helped propel the transmission of Buddhist belief and practice.[63] A series of scholars have called particular attention to the relationship between medieval performance texts and preaching (*shōdō*). It was commonly assumed by many that the new lineages innovated with preaching when, in fact, the pronouncements and other ritual features undertaken by Tendai, Shingon, Kegon, and other Kenmitsu monks directly involved preaching to their audiences over the course of the medieval era.[64]

Continental influences and "vernacular" religion

Learning in the medieval era was intimately related to continental notions of education, and like earlier eras owed a great debt to Chinese notions of pedagogy and practical learning. One of the principal terms for learning in the Japanese court was *kangaku* or "Han Learning" (study of Chinese classics and philosophy) and thus the association with China was often direct. At the same time, in the Japanese case, the cultures of learning developed as much within the monastic walls as within, say, the state university, given the emphasis in Buddhism on learning as a central feature of the Buddhist path and the positioning of scions of the royal court—and now upper-echelon warriors as well—within cloisters of the major complexes; moreover, as noted above, Kūkai was seen by early medieval nobles as one of the leading scholars of earlier times and hence his associations with the writing of literary treatises, Sino-Japanese prose and poems (*kanbun*, *kanshi*), and with superior calligraphy were firmly entrenched, not to mention the seminal beginnings of monastic versions of court performance-poetry (*rōei*)—Tendai and Shingon lineages combining court practice with *shōmyō* music and Buddhist verses.[65]

All these developments featured *topoi* and practices of learning as a prominent feature, and many also included performance, derived both from the temple complexes as well as the court itself along with society, which tended to emulate the royal culture. Recently, a series of scholars have considered the divinatory traditions of Yin-yang masters (*onmyōji*), who interacted with a series of sectors of society in the medieval era and had similar features. Pioneered in recent times by Murayama Shūichi, study of the Ying-Yang way (Onmyōdō) has concentrated on a combination of historical overviews and analyses of specific rites such as divination and purification or calendar and astronomical practices.

The term Onmyōdō arose in the mid-Heian period as part of the development of the so-called "ways," which were codes of learning and practice distinct from what had come earlier, such as the official Yin-Yang Bureau (Onmyōryō) of the government. In particular, the Kamo and Abe families gained control over yin-yang practices of the royal court and, like other incipient houses

(*ie*) of their day began to split into multiple lineages over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Moreover, with the Kamakura period, yin-yang masters of the Abe family, known especially for their astronomical path (Tenmondō), took up residence in Kamakura to undertake divination and other rites on behalf of the shogunate and the shogun's family. The early Ashikaga shoguns would go on to be great patrons of the yin-yang masters, who came to be given high aristocratic rank for the first time, a situation which would change dramatically for the worse in the late Muromachi with the gradual downfall of the shogunate itself.[66]

A related set of practices was the array of celestial rites introduced from the continent that flourished at the court and, to some extent, among the populace in the medieval era, sometimes in novel form. Such worship of celestial bodies existed in multiple institutions and classes and clearly constituted a prominent mode of what might be called vernacular religion. Although such practices seem to have originally been confined to the yin-yang practitioners, the medieval era featured their incorporation into a broad set of esoteric Buddhist and other autochthonous practices. Lucia Dolce has outlined the development and character of these rites over the course of the medieval and early modern eras. Astronomical divination—uranomancy—took directly yin-yang form (Tenmondō) but also a Buddhist form (Sukuyōdō). Veneration of the Pole Star was undertaken in both Onmyōdō (Chintaku reifujin) and esoteric Buddhist (Sonshōō, Myōken) guise. Big Dipper rites for increase of lifespan were particularly prominent in esoteric Buddhist circles.[67]

In the meantime, scholars have increasingly recognized that continental influences, from south Asia as well as from China, had added impact on Japanese religious institutions and on the development of vernacular religion. Kamikawa Michio and Yokouchi Hiroto have demonstrated that Buddhist monasteries were significantly influenced by the continent over the course of the late Heian period, and both Fabio Rambelli and Iyanaga Nobumi have called attention to the influence of Indian divinities on medieval Japanese Buddhism and the development of "Shintō."[68] Martin Collcutt has previously focused on the arrival of multiple Chan (J. Zen) masters to Japan, including their interaction with the government and other Buddhists between the mid-thirteenth and mid-fourteenth centuries, and Harada Masatoshi, among others, has stressed their role.[69] Ōtsuka Norihiro has called attention to those figures who traveled to the continent and the larger influence of Song Buddhism and the discourse of the Latter Age of the Dharma.[70]

Buddhist "schools," Shintō, and the rise of early modern Japanese religion

Scholarship on the later medieval period was hampered historically by scholars' lack of interest, since it was implicitly assumed that the major players in the development of Japanese religion were the founders of major institutions and that their thought—e.g., Saichō, Kūkai, and then the founders of the Kamakura "New" schools—had the greatest influence on the meaning and development of Japanese religion. As I noted above, most postwar historians associated the new schools' founders as pivotal figures who liberated the masses in the Kamakura period. Yoshida Kazuhiko has, however, argued that it was, in fact, only in the late medieval era that most of the "new schools" became prominent institutions. Although we have seen that the Rinzai lineages acquired institutional prominence much earlier, Yoshida focuses particularly on the Sōtō lineages, with their practice of funerals for the populace, and the True Pure Land lineages, which placed emphasis on sectarian (*kyōdan*) identity. With regard to the latter, Mark L. Blum has suggested that Rennyo (1415–1499) established in his organization the beginnings of sectarian self-sufficiency similar to what would develop in the "modern" period. In any event, scholars are in general agreement that Rennyo's True Pure Land lineages, the Hokke lineages, and the Sōtō lineages, developed regimes of study that were self-sufficient and hence not looking for Tendai

instruction in the teachings of other schools, which marked them off from the more common historical practice of study of multiple schools (*shoshū kengaku*) mentioned earlier. Their self-sufficiency was also often accompanied by self-governance in the form of leagues (*ikki*), which seems to have contributed further to their sectarian tendencies. These groups, which thus identified themselves organizationally and doctrinally as distinct "schools" (*shū*), are thus seen as having constituted the seminal beginning of what would later be the modern sects of Japanese Buddhism.[71]

As noted above, Kami-Buddha combinatory discourse was common in the traditional Kenmitsu Buddhist complexes and, apparently, throughout medieval Japanese religion. Here, recent research has taken note of a trend to interpret *kami* and *kami*-related ritual outside the Buddhist cosmological paradigms. In certain "Shintō" lineages and in Tendai *honji-suijaku* theory of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, *kami* came to be prioritized over Buddhist divinities. Yoshida Kanetomo (1435–1511), who developed the first sustained argument that promoted non-Buddhist *kami* as the highest sources of sacrality, seems to have drawn upon this template in order to create his cosmology for the Yoshida lineage of Shintō.[72]

In this way, some Shintō lineages became distinct and identifiable over the course of the late medieval era, features that would still remain rare until the great institutional changes of the Tokugawa and early Meiji periods, which assigned novel distinctions between Shintō and Buddhism culminating in their separation as religions in the modern era. Meanwhile, scholars have increasingly undertaken study of the broader development of the semi-marginal religious groups noted above such as the holy ones and mountain ascetics. Ōta Naoyuki has offered an extensive analysis of the development of the fundraising-monk (*kanjin-sō*) groups over the course of the medieval and late medieval eras, drawing attention to research on the role of the meditation-precepts monks (*zenritsu-sō*) noted earlier, who were seen by many in Japanese society as pure practitioners and hence capable of undertaking practices such as fundraising and funerary practices; by the late medieval era, the fundraisers were no longer limited to such monks but took varied forms and were typically not officially recognized as official clerics in temples although they meanwhile often came to have greater influence in the temple-shrine complexes. Scholars now understand that the "Kōya holy ones" (Kōya hijiri) included a distinct organization on Mount Kōya but also varied groups and individuals who seem to have traveled throughout the Kansai region; having originally been associated with fundraising and Kōya burial practices, these figures were sometimes ambulatory entertainers or itinerant peddlers carrying wares yet still retained the name of holy ones and hence retained religious associations for many who saw them.[73]

The challenge for scholars now is to understand how this changing institutional situation in the temple-shrine complexes, the appearance of Shintō lineages, the increasing prominence of the "new" schools of Japanese Buddhism, and the broad array of itinerant figures on the landscape, when considered together with the breakdown of central authority and the introduction of utterly novel Christian ideas, influenced the appearance and consolidation of new religious authority and practice in the Tokugawa period.

Notes

1 Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*.
2 See, for example, his *Nihon jōdokyō seiritsushi no kenkyū*, especially in the preface, 5–8.
3 We will revisit Kuroda and Taira in the next section, though we should note here Taira's critique of Inoue in *Nihon chūsei no shakai to bukkyō*, 44–63. See also English-language studies: William M. Bodiford, "The Medieval Period: Eleventh to Sixteenth Centuries," and William E. Deal and Brian Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*.

4 Students of medieval primary religious sources should avail themselves of the searchable databases online, including the Taisho canon (http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/), a series of collections (including *Dainihon shiryō*, *Kamakura ibun*, *Dainihon komonjo*, and aristocrats' diaries) on the Historiographical Institute website (wwwap.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/ships/db.html), the National museum of Japanese Literature (www.nijl.ac.jp/pages/database/), and the National Diet Library (http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/). Sueki Fumihiko has claimed that the ongoing and comprehensive study of these manuscript collections over the last twenty to thirty years has enabled scholars to transcend the tendency to cherry-pick medieval works and to work collaboratively to incorporate the insights of a broad range of disciplines, and to increasingly interact with scholars from other countries and recognize the influence of continental Asia on medieval Japan. See Sueki, "Sōron: chūsei no nihon shisō," 17–18.

5 See Brian Ruppert, "Ejū, Kanjin, Shingon 'Ruijū' and the Early Medieval Japanese Aristocracy," 171–177; Matsuzono Hitoshi, "Shukaku Hosshinnō to nikki: chūsei zenki no jike no nikki no rikai no tame ni." See also Kamikawa Michio, *Nihon chūsei bukkyō keiseishi ron*, 302–312.

6 Abe Yasurō, *Chūsei Nihon no shūkyō tekusuto taikei*, 186; Kamikawa, *Nihon chūsei bukkyō to higashi ajia sekai*, 78.

7 Satō Hiroo, "Wrathful Deities and Saving Deities"; and *Kishōmon no seishinshi: chūsei sekai no kami to hotoke*, esp. 14–19.

8 The seminal beginnings of such a development could be seen, in part, in the marked prominence of Shingon abbots at the "non"-Shingon Tōdaiji temple from the tenth century onward. See Nagamura Makoto, *Chūsei Tōdaiji no soshiki to keiei*, 342.

9 See Kuroda Toshio, "The Development of the *Kenmitsu* System as Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy"; Taira Masayuki, the heir to Kuroda's theory, has questioned whether the supposition of the centrality of esoteric Buddhism in "Kuroda Toshio and the *Kenmitsu Taisei* Theory." Additionally, see Sueki Fumihiko, "A Reexamination of the Kenmitsu Taisei Theory" and *Kamakura bukkyō keisei ron*, and Jacqueline I. Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Japanese Buddhism*. While the term Kenmitsu (eso-exoteric) dates to the medieval period, it was in modern scholarship that the term came to be used to refer to the temples connected with the establishment families and related institutions, the power-bloc system (*kenmon taisei*).

10 See "Kamakura mikkyō," in Kanagawa kenritsu Kanazawa bunko, *Kamakura mikkyō: shōgungoji no tera to sō*. See also Taira Masayuki, "Kamakura ni okeru kenmitsu Bukkyō no tenkai."

11 "Kamakura mikkyō," ibid., 7–8. This discussion of the shogunate's incorporation of Kenmitsu monks is particularly indebted to this article.

12 Concerning Jōgō, see Taira Masayuki, "Jōgō to Kamakura bakufu."

13 Mikael Bauer, "Monastic Lineages and Ritual Participation: A Proposed Revision of Kuroda Toshio's *Kenmitsui Taisei*." I would just note that Kuroda included an extensive discussion of the monks' assemblies and organization in the monasteries and implicitly held a position close to that of Bauer.

14 Nenbutsu-only refers to exclusive devotion to the practice of calling upon the Pure Land Buddha Amida (Skt. Amitābha), typically undertaken in the belief that the world had entered the Final Age of the Dharma (*mappō*), a notion common throughout East Asia. Hōnen was the first to openly promote this practice on Mount Hiei, and it was broadly criticized by the authorities there because Hiei featured a catholic approach to the Buddhist path.

15 See Matsuo Kenji, *A History of Japanese Buddhism*. Matsuo's effort to create a broad-ranging theory based on this observation, to support the notion that Kamakura New Buddhists were major historical actors in the early medieval era has, however, had little impact on the larger field.

16 For a recent study reflecting the ongoing impact of Kenmitsu institutions, see Thomas Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol: An Age of Ritual Determinism in Fourteenth-Century Japan*.

17 Taira, *Nihon chūsei no shakai to bukkyō*. For a discussion taking the same general view as Taira's, see Yoshida Kazuhiko, "Nihon bukkyōshi no jiki kubun." See also Ōtsuka Norihiro, "Mondai no shozai to honcho no kōsei."

18 Concerning his devotion to Jizō, see Hank Glassman, *The Face of Jizō: Image and Cult in Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, 72.

19 See Sueki Fumihiko. "Yōsai shū sōsetsu."

20 For a discussion of the "great fundraiser post" see Yoshikawa Satoshi et al., "Tōdaiji daikanjin monjo shū no kenkyū."

21 See Harada Masatoshi, "Kujō Michi'ie no Tōfukuji to Enni."

22 Concerning Keizan, see Bernard Faure, *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, 47–70; with regard to Nōnin and Daruma-shū, see Bernard Faure, "The Daruma-shū, Dōgen, and Sōtō Zen."

23 With regard to Ippen, see Dennis Hirota, *No Abode: The Record of Ippen*.
24 Uejima, "Kamakura jidai no bukkyō," 245–247; Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Japanese Buddhism*, 237–299; and Sueki's effort to problematize these respective figures in *Kamakura bukkyō keisei ron*, 297–299, and *Kamakura bukkyō tenkai ron*, 189–201. Taigen Dan Leighton has also illuminated Dōgen's great interest in the *Lotus Sutra* in *Visions of Awakening Space and Time*.
25 On Myō'e, see George Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism*; and Mark Unno, *Shingon Refractions: Myōe and the Mantra of Light*. On Gyōnen, see Mark L. Blum, *The Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism: A Study and Translation of Gyōnen's "Jōdo Hōmon Genrushō."* For an in-depth study of Jōkei, see James L. Ford, *Jōkei and Buddhist Devotion in Early Medieval Japan*. On Shunjō, see Minowa, *Chūsei shoki nanto kairitsu fukkō no kenkyū*, 74–132.
26 Taira also includes Enni, trained in Shingon and Tendai in addition to Zen; see "Kubu kenryoku no henyō to bukkyōkai," 8–10. Uejima Susumu's article is too complex to summarize briefly here in this regard, but he also emphasizes the attention to efforts to promote the precepts and Zen practice in the early medieval era; see his "Kamakura jidai no bukkyō," 240–247.
27 Ōtsuka, "Mondai no shozai to honcho no kōsei," 25–27.
28 For the older view see Kasahara Kazuo, *Nyonin ōjō shisō no keifu*, 392–394; the same view is presented in English in Kasahara, "Women and Buddhism." For different views, see Taira Masayuki, "Kyūbukkyō to josei," and Brian Ruppert, *Jewel in the Ashes: Buddha Relics and Power in Early Medieval Japan*, 192–229.
29 See Barbara Ruch, *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*.
30 See Lori Meeks, *Hokkeji and the Reemergence of Female Monastic Orders in Medieval Japan*, 27–110.
31 For studies of Shinran and his main wife Eshin-ni, see James C. Dobbins, *Jōdo Shinshū: Shin Buddhism in Medieval Japan*, and Dobbins, *Letters of the Nun Eshinni: Images of Pure Land Buddhism in Medieval Japan*; also see Endō Hajime, "The Original Bōmori: Husband and Wife Congregations in Early Shin Buddhism."
32 See Bernard Faure, *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality*, 207–278.
33 Sueki, "Sōron: chūsei no nihon shisō," 19–20.
34 For overviews of the institutional associations of Kami-Buddhist discourse, see Teeuwen and Rambelli, "Introduction: Combinatory Religion and the Honji Suijaku Paradigm in Pre-modern Japan"; and Sueki Fumihiko, *Chūsei no kami to hotoke*.
35 Itō Satoshi, *Chūsei Tenshō Daijin shinkō no kenkyū*, 28–34.
36 Allan Grapard, "Institution, Ritual, and Ideology: The Twenty-Two Shrine-Temple Multiplexes of Heian Japan."
37 For a discussion of Hiesha shrine at Hie, see John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*; and for Daigoji, see Steven Trenson, "Daigoji ni okeru kiu no kakuritsu to Seiryūjin shinkō."
38 Kadoya Atsushi, "Myths, Rites, and Icons: Three Views of a Secret" and Matsumoto Ikuyo, *Chūsei ōken to sokui kanjō*, 35–151. On the protector-rites see Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, 64–70, and Uejima Susumu, *Nihon chūsei shakai no keisei to ōken*, 370–441. On Amaterasu, see Itō, *Chūsei Tenshō Daijin shinkō no kenkyū*; and on Hie Sannō, see Breen and Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*, 66–128.
39 Itō, *Chūsei Tenshō Daijin shinkō no kenkyū*, 9–10.
40 Teeuwen and Rambelli, "Introduction," 7–17.
41 See Max Moerman, *Localizing Paradise: Kumano Pilgrimage and the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan*; Heather Blair, "Mountain and Plain: Kinpusen and Kōfukuji in the Early Middle Ages"; and Brian Ruppert, "Royal Progresses to Shrines: Cloistered Sovereign, Tennō, and the Sacred Sites of Early Medieval Japan."
42 Satō Hiroo, "Chūsei no minshū shisō," 292–295.
43 See Satō, "Chūsei no minshū shisō," 296–298. On Shōtoku in literature and visual representation, see Abe, *Chūsei nihon no shūkyō tekusuto taikei*, 27–151; from an art history perspective, see Kevin Gray Carr, *Plotting the Prince: Shōtoku Cults and the Mapping of Medieval Japanese Buddhism*. On Shinran, see Kenneth Doo Young Lee, *The Prince and the Monk: Shōtoku Worship in Shinran's Buddhism*; and on the influence over the monk Keisei, see Fujii Yukiko, *Shōtoku Taishi no denshō*, 36–61. More recently, Niimi Yasuko has established that the visual-biographical work *Kōbō Daishi gyōjō'e* (fourteenth century) was based on a contemporary scholastic work that elaborated upon materials written in the twelfth century (Niimi, "Tōji shozō *Kōbō Daishi gyōjō'e* no seisaku katei: kotobagaki no hensan o chūshin ni").
44 Ichiro Hori did take note of the association of some *hijiri* with schools of Buddhism, but emphasized that the character of *hijiri* "always exhibited a negative attitude toward society, especially toward authority or social status" (106). See Hori, *Folk Religion in Japan: Continuity and Change*, 103–110.

45 A work that argues for their independence is Matsuo, *A History of Japanese Buddhism*. Nevertheless, most scholars in historical fields now see them as related to institutions. See Kikuchi Hiroki, *Chūsei bukkyō no genkei to tenkai*. Two decades ago, Janet R. Goodwin published an excellent study of the *hijiri* and made clear that many *hijiri* were connected to established institutions; see her *Alms and Vagabonds: Buddhist Temples and Popular Pilgrimage in Medieval Japan*.

46 See Chōgen's *Sazen shū* in Kobayashi Takeshi, *Shunjōbō Chōgen shiryō shūsei*, 482–495. For an example of the view that Chōgen had only "occasional relationships with the secular powers," see Matsuo, *History of Japanese Buddhism*, 102. Hisano Nobuyoshi has discussed these establishment connections in the context of Chōgen's reception of patronage by the Murakami Genji nobles, which also runs counter to assumptions of his independence from the major institutions of his days; see Hisano, *Chōgen to Eisai: sugureta jissenteki shakai jigyōka/shūkyōsha*, 37–41. See also John M. Rosenfield, *Portraits of Chōgen: The Transformation of Buddhist Art in Early Medieval Japan*, 27–30.

47 Kikuchi, *Chūsei bukkyō no genkei to tenkai*; concerning the late medieval era *kanjin* practitioners and related *hijiri*, see Ōta Naoyuki, *Chūsei no shaji to shinkō: kanjin to kanjin hijiri no jidai*. I have referred to these as a set of groups I call "networking monks" (*nettowaaku sō*); see Deal and Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, 153–160, and Brian Ruppert, "Nihon chūsei no nettowaaku-sō to shōdō shōgyō no denpa."

48 See Miyake Hitoshi, most influential in the study of Shugendō traditions, in *The Mandala of the Mountain: Shugendo and Folk Religion* for an overview. For more recent research see Bernard Faure et al., *Shugendō: The History and Culture of a Japanese Religion*.

49 See Sekiguchi Makiko, "The Sanbō'in Monzeki and its Inception as Head Temple of the Tōzan Group," and Sekiguchi, *Shugendō kyōdan seiritsushi*.

50 Hitoshi Miyake, *The Mandala of the Mountain*, 54–65.

51 Major works on *shōgyō* in Japanese include, from a historian's perspective, Nagamura Makato, *Chūsei jiin shiryō ron* (including his discussion of debates and sacred works, 272–332) and from a literature scholar's viewpoint, Abe, *Chūsei Nihon no shūkyō tekusuto taikei*, as well as Abe Yasurō, *Chūsei bungaku to jiin shiryō/shōgyō*, especially the introductory essay, 13–37. See also Brian Ruppert, "A Tale of Catalogs and Colophons: The Scope of the Lineage, the Touch of the Master and Discourses of Authenticity in Medieval Shingon Buddhism," and Asuka Sango, "Buddhist Debate and the Production and Transmission of Shōgyō in Medieval Japan."

52 See Sakagami Masao, "Nanto Bukkyō ni okeru hidenteki keikō."

53 Nagamura Makoto, " 'Shōsoku' to 'shōgyō': Shinran ni yoru Tōgoku kyōke no hitokoma." There were also so-called "good friends" (*zenchishiki*) who in medieval Japan came to refer in death-ritual contexts to persons who helped the dying in the practices necessary to maintain mindfulness. These "good friends" were, in elite circles, often prominent ritual practitioners but sometimes so-called "meditation monks" (*zensō*) who usually bore only an ambiguous connection with the established monasteries and were associated with "retreat holy men" (*bessho hijiri*). See Jacqueline I. Stone, "With the Help of 'Good Friends': Deathbed Ritual Practices in Early Medieval Japan," 66–88. See also Uejima, *Nihon chūsei shakai no keisei to ōken*, 497–527.

54 Hiramatsu Reizō, "Kenchi shōnin no shōgai."

55 The True Pure Land groups, for example, regularly venerated Hōnen's spirit in addition to Shinran's. Shingon lineages also commonly venerated more recent masters in addition to Kōbō Daishi. A prominent proponent of the focus on ancestral-master veneration has been Nakao Takashi. See, for example, his *Nichiren shinkō no keifu to girei*.

56 Ōhashi Naoyoshi, " 'Jisha-ken' no paasupekutibu."

57 Mujū was a very complex figure who undertook study of an entire array of Buddhist schools, including the esoteric lineages, the precepts, and some Nara lineages. See Abe Yasurō, "*Mujū shū* sōsetsu," and Chikamoto Kensuke, "Tonsei to kengaku/kenshū: Mujū ni okeru hanshūhateki shikō o megutte." On Nōshin and Chikotsu Dai'e, see Ruppert, "A Tale of Catalogs and Colophons," 57–59; on Shiren, see Kikuchi Hiroki, "Kokan Shiren no rekishiteki ichi" and Shōgei, see Suzuki Hideyuki, *Chūsei gakusō to Shintō*. Concerning "pure" Zen, see Bernard Faure, *Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Zen/Chan Buddhism*; William M. Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*, and T. Griffith Foulk, "Ritual in Japanese Zen Buddhism."

58 See Deal and Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, 142–160 and Joseph Parker, *Zen Buddhist Landscape Arts of Early Muromachi Japan, 1336–1573*; see also Imaizumi Yoshio, *Zensōtachi no Muromachi jidai: Chūsei zenrin no monogatari* and Wada Ukiko, "Zenrin no shisō to bunka."

59 Shiba Kayono, "Johen" and "Dokyōdō kō."

60 Susan Blakeley Klein, *Allegories of Desire: Esoteric Literary Commentaries of Medieval Japan*.
61 Nagamura Makoto, "Jiin shakaishi no shiten kara miru chūsei no hō'e." Indeed, Nagamura points out that recluse-monks (*tonseisha*), despite their image of rejection of official monastic life, not only took part in lecture-liturgies and related performances but also opened seminaries (*dangi*) in cloisters and other parts of the Tōdaiji compound.
62 Komine Kazuaki, *Chūsei hō'e bungei ron*, i–viii, 397–406.
63 Abe, *Chūsei Nihon no shūkyō tekusuto taikei*, 15–16.
64 See Matsuo Kōichi, *Higashi ajia no shūkyō bunka: ekkyō to henyō*; Kanagawa kenritsu Kanazawa bunko, *Gosun shihō no bungaku: jūyō bunkazai 'Shōmyōji shōgyō' shōdō shiryō mokuroku*; and R. Keller Kimbrough, *Preachers, Poets, Women, and the Way: Izumi Shikibu and the Buddhist Literature of Medieval Japan*.
65 See *Wakan rōeishū*, "kaidai."
66 See Hayashi Makoto and Matthias Hayek, "Editors' Introduction: Onmyōdō in Japanese History," and Kimura Sumiko, "Joron." For a nuanced theoretical discussion of problems related to Onmyōdō, see Bernard Faure, "A Religion in Search of a Founder?"
67 Lucia Dolce, "The Worship of Celestial Bodies in Japan: Politics, Rituals, and Icons." Prominent medieval Shingon monks are known to have been interested in such practices; the famous Tendai abbot Jien (1155–1225) repeatedly performed the celestial Shijōkō hō for the retired sovereign Gotoba (Meri Arichi, "Seven Stars of Heaven and Seven Shrines on Earth: The Big Dipper and the Hie Shrine in the Medieval Period").
68 See Yokouchi Hiroto, *Nihon chūsei no bukkyō to higashi ajia*; Kamikawa Michio, "Issaikyō"; Rambelli, "Buddhist Republican Thought and Institutions in Japan: Preliminary Considerations"; and Iyanaga Nobumi, "Medieval Shintō as a Form of 'Japanese Hinduism'."
69 See Martin Collcutt, *Five Mountains: The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan*, and Harada Masatoshi, "Nanbokuchō/Muromachi jidai ni okeru Musōha no denbōkan to kesa/chinzō."
70 Ōtsuka, "Mondai no shozai to honcho no kōsei," 25–27. Although there is some overlap of focus, his view is distinct from those of Taira and others who have taken note of meditation-precepts figures, noted above.
71 Yoshida, "Nihon bukkyōshi no jiki kubun;" Sueki Fumihiko, *Kinsei no Bukkyō*, 20–22; Kanda Chisato, *Shūkyō de yomu sengoku jidai*. For an in-depth study of Sōtō Zen funerals and memorials, see Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*; Mark L. Blum, "Introduction: The Study of Rennyo."
72 See Rambelli, "Re-positioning the Gods: 'Medieval Shintō' and the Origins of Non-Buddhist Discourses on the Kami," and Teeuwen and Rambelli, "Introduction."
73 Ōta, *Chūsei no shaji to shinkō: kanjin to kanjin hijiri no jidai*, and Murakami Hiroko, "Kōyasan ni okeru hijirikata no seiritsu," 78–81.

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Part IV
Economy and technology



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Coins and commerce in classical Japan

Mikami Yoshitaka, with Joshua Batts

Beginning in the latter half of the seventh century with the adoption of the *ritsuryō* system, the classical Japanese state carried out an overhaul of its structures of governance through the importation of a variety of systems and cultural products from the Tang dynasty (618–907) in China. One such import was a system of currency. The early Japanese state imitated the shape and form of the copper coins issued by the court in China, thereby putting into circulation an original currency in the Japanese archipelago as well.

Publications on coins in Japan prior to 1600 in English remain extremely limited, and work devoted to their circulation and production in the Nara and Heian periods is practically nonexistent. Western scholarship focusing specifically on currency typically begins coverage with the importation of Sung coins into the archipelago in the twelfth century. There are, in fact, but two book-length monographs on the development of a money economy in Japan prior to the Tokugawa period (1600–1868).

The most recent, Ethan Segal's *Coins, Trade, and the State: Economic Growth in Early Medieval Japan*, discusses the development of a cash economy and expanding markets from roughly 1150 to 1400, emphasizing the economic growth of the era and the important role of peripheral actors in the increased use of cash and financial instruments such as bills of exchange. Segal argues that the advent of money and markets destabilized the political order of landed elites until they took a more involved role after 1400. Segal's timeframe is the early medieval period, but the first chapter does discuss the broader history of coins in the archipelago, folding it into a larger discussion of the relationships between currency, political authority, and economic growth.

The second monograph is Delmer Brown's *Money Economy in Medieval Japan: A Study in the Use of Coins*, published in 1951. Brown saw economic dynamism primarily in the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries rather than those in between, and his lean account consistently presented the actions and perspectives of elites. The book includes a very brief summary of early domestic coinages, but quickly moves on to later centuries. The balance of Brown's narrative devotes itself to the transformation of Japan's mining industry in the mid-sixteenth century, and he argued for its importance in the development of a more mature money economy in the decades that followed. This puts him at odds with Segal's emphasis on earlier centuries and actors outside central institutions. The newer work is the more robust, although Brown includes a fair amount of information on the mining of copper, silver, and gold that is outside the purview of Segal's study.

Articles in English are almost as scarce as book-length studies. William Wayne Farris' "Trade, Money, and Merchants in Nara Japan" is one of the few articles to cover this early period, weaving discussion of the court's currencies into the author's principal argument regarding the critical role lower-level courtiers played as facilitators of trade, especially between the capital and outlying regions. And Kozo Yamamura's "The Decline of the Ritsuryō System" concludes with a discussion of the court's various coinages in the Nara and Heian periods and the reasons why they proved insufficient to monetize the economy. In addition, Yamamura and Kamiki Tetsuo trace the exchange of copper, silver, and gold between China and Japan leading up to and during the peak of the silver trade in East Asia around the turn of the seventeenth century, as part of an important collection of essays on the global flow of coins and bullion. Yamamura has also published on the preferences of sixteenth-century daimyo for a system of value and collection of tribute based on either cash or rice, extending discussion of the back and forth between cash and commodity currencies discussed here for earlier periods in history.[1]

There are also a few studies treating premodern commerce more generally that include a discussion of coins and currency to varying degrees.[2] Nevertheless, the field remains undeveloped and ripe for exploration. Even among studies of currency, imported coins in the medieval period cast a long shadow over domestic antecedents. Further scholarship will be required to shed light on their circulation, value, and contexts.

The following chapter outlines the characteristics of the currencies Japan's classical state issued period by period from the late seventh century through the end of the Heian period in the twelfth century, together with a discussion of circulation and commerce in the classical period more broadly.

Currency in the later seventh century

Currency in premodern Japan took the form of round copper coins with square holes in the center, marked with Chinese characters inscribed into their surface. Coins consistently took this shape from the classical period up through the early modern era, and their design reflects the influence of similar copper coins made in premodern China from the Qin dynasty's (221–206 BCE) *banliang* coinage (Jap. *hanryōsen*, *c.*210 BCE) onward. In this way, Japanese coins are a currency very typical of East Asia. The *ritsuryō* state issued twelve distinct coinages from the beginning of the eighth century through the first half of the tenth century. The birth of premodern currencies in the Japanese archipelago resulted from the impact of the Tang court's *Kaiyuan tong bao* copper coins (Jap. *Kaigen tsūhō*), issued in 621.

It was once common belief in the field of Japanese history that the first minting of copper coins in the archipelago was the *Wadō kaichin*, struck in 708.[3] In 1999, however, the remnants of a large-scale workshop dating to the latter half of the seventh century were discovered in the Asuka Pond Historic Ruins in Asuka, Nara prefecture. From these ruins, researchers excavated large quantities of round copper coins with square holes and the characters 富本 (*fuhon*, "foundation of wealth") inscribed into them. Furthermore, these coins were discovered together with the relics of a foundry, demonstrating conclusively that copper coins pre-dating the *Wadō kaichin* were made in the late seventh century.

The excavation in turn impacted the conventional interpretation of the historical documentary record. According to the *Nihon shoki*, in the twelfth year of Emperor Tenmu's reign (683), on the fifteenth day of the fourth month, the state ordered that "henceforth, [all] must use copper coins. Silver coins may not be used."[4] Prior to the excavation, it was uncertain what "copper coins" referred to here, but subsequently it became clear that the coins mentioned in the Tenmu court's ordinance were in fact *fuhon* pieces. Their shape and weight were nearly identical to the

Tang court's *Kaiyuan tong bao* mentioned earlier, suggesting that the former were made with the latter as a model.

The discovery of the *fuhon* coins proved that copper coins were struck in the time of the Tenmu emperor in the late seventh century, prior to the issuance of the *Wadō kaichin*. Nevertheless, opinion remains divided as to whether or not these coins were actually used as a circulating currency. Scholars adopting the position that the *fuhon* coins were intended for circulation maintain that the state issued the coins in order to encourage consumer activity in Fujiwara-kyō, Japan's first capital adhering to a grid pattern on the Chinese model.[5] Another line of thought holds that the necessary conditions for a circulating currency were not yet extant in the seventh century, and posits instead that the coins were used as talismans in an assortment of rites and rituals.[6] These arguments are also important points of debate when considering the recognition of currency as a material object among people in the archipelago during the classical period.

Even before the appearance of an original currency in the Japanese archipelago, copper coins made in ancient China such as the *Huo guan* (Jap. *Kasen*, *c.*14 CE) and the *Wu zhu* coinage (Jap. *Goshusen*, *c.*118 BCE) regularly flowed into the islands. In all these cases, the coins were used for rites and rituals rather than circulating as currency, serving, for example, as burial accessories in *kofun*.[7] The same tendency was evident in the Korean peninsula at this time. In the tomb of the sixth-century Paekche king Muryŏng (Jap. *Bunei*, r. 501–523), a string of some ninety *Wu zhu* iron coins from the southern court of the Chinese Liang dynasty were interred as burial accessories.[8] Thus in the Korean peninsula as well, the existence of Chinese copper coins was well-known in the classical period, but such coins were not adopted for actual economic activity, and were instead used in various rites.

Attitudes in the Japanese archipelago at the time of this influx of copper coins from China were much the same. Considered from this perspective, both the meaning of the *fuhon* inscription and the arrangement of the seven luminary bodies from left to right across the coins are of mystical import, drawing attention to the ritualistic character of copper coins at the time.[9] Additionally, these same features demarcate a clear line between the *fuhon* coins and those from the *Wadō kaichin* onward, labeled with four-character inscriptions.

During the excavation of the Fujiwara-kyō ruins in 2007, a Sue-ware vessel with *fuhon* coins and crystals placed inside was uncovered, making it clear that the coins were used as part of a ground-breaking ceremony to pray for the safe completion of the palace's construction.[10] This discovery does nothing more than demonstrate one function of the *fuhon* coins and does not preclude the possibility that the coinage was used as a circulating currency—although it does firmly establish as fact the long-assumed role the coins played in ritual. The question of whether or not the seventh-century *fuhon* pieces were utilized for practical economic activity requires further investigation.

What were the currencies that structured economic activity in the seventh century? From the *Nihon shoki* entry from 683 introduced above—which forbids the further use of silver coins and ordered the use of copper currency instead—we can infer that silver coins were in use during the seventh century. Archaeological findings support the documentary record, in that flat, round silver plates have been unearthed at ruins dating to the seventh century. These silver plates are of a similar shape to copper coins but are not marked by any characters, and as a result are referred to as *mumon ginsen* ("characterless silver coins"). It is thought that it is precisely these *mumon* silver plates that are the "silver coins" mentioned in Tenmu's era. Their method of manufacture was, however, distinct: unlike the copper coins, which were cast, the *mumon* plates were forged.

Nevertheless, opinion is again divided over whether or not the *mumon ginsen* were used as currency in economic transactions.[11] For instance, it is possible to interpret the aforementioned *Nihon shoki* entry as a regulation of their application in ritual rather than an order pertaining to

their use in the economic sphere.[12] There are in fact examples of *mumon ginsen* and raw silver ore used as internment materials from the seventh through the eighth centuries, confirming their use outside the realm of economic activity.[13] Although it is widely recognized that silver ore, at least, performed a monetary role and circulated in classical society, it does not follow that the volume in circulation was able to support commerce in its entirety.[14] Rather, in-kind currencies such as rice, cloth, silk wadding, and salt were used as currencies in the practical economic exchanges of the seventh century.[15] Even after the appearance of the *Wadō kaichin* in the eighth century the monetary function of these commodities continued, although they had played a more prominent role in commerce prior to the issuance of copper coins.

The *Wadō kaichin* struck in 708 was a new currency, introduced in addition to the in-kind currencies circulating in this complicated fashion. It is thought that the coinage also served to unify the complex measures of value resulting from multiple commodities of exchange. The *ritsuryō* state issued the *Wadō kaichin* with an eye toward ensuring the financial resources necessary for the upcoming relocation of the capital to Heijō-kyō (Nara) in 710. Afterward, the coins came to circulate in and around the capital area as a currency supporting the people of the new city.

Coinage in the Nara period

According to the *Shoku Nihongi*, copper was discovered in the Chichibu district of Musashi during the first month of 708 and presented to the court.[16] Full-scale casting of coins was initiated that same year, following the establishment of an Office of the Mint (*Jusenshi*) the following month. The new office first issued *Wadō kaichin* silver coins in the fifth month, followed by copper coins in the eighth month.[17]

The *ritsuryō* state placed a great deal of value on copper coins, as can be gathered from the fact that the presentation of Japanese copper catalyzed the issuance of a coinage. Nevertheless, the first coins minted were silver, not copper. There are various opinions as to the reasons for this. Sakaehara Towao suggests that the silver coins served as an intermediary, allowing the copper coins that followed to assume in turn the monetary function held by silver in previous eras.[18] Tōno Haruyuki maintains that copper coins alone were insufficient, and that by leading with silver coins the court increased the total value of currency in circulation.[19] In each of the next two years, in the eighth month of 709 and again in the ninth month of 710, the court issued prohibitions against the use of silver coins, and it is thought that the minting of copper coins as planned and the sudden spread of counterfeit silver coinage together formed the backdrop to these edicts.

As stated previously, an important reason that the *ritsuryō* state issued the *Wadō kaichin* at this time was in order to bear the costs of construction for the new capital city, Heijō-kyō. Using copper coins to cover the labor expenses for construction in turn made it incumbent upon the court to ensure that their consumption and distribution in the area around the new capital progressed smoothly. At the same time, by endowing copper coins with a higher official value than the copper ore from which they were made, the government sought to secure additional profits.[20]

In order to ensure that the *Wadō kaichin* circulated, the government needed to work scrupulously to implement a policy toward that end. The court denoted a standard rate of exchange with in-kind currencies such as rice and cloth, establishing six *shō* (approximately four to six liters) of unhulled rice as equal to one copper coin in 711, and five coins as equal to one *kida* (about four meters) of cloth the following year.[21] That same year, the government continued its program of encouraging circulation through the promulgation of the *Chikusen joi hō*, a law allowing certain court ranks to be purchased for set numbers of copper coins, thereby rewarding those who had

stored them away.[22] On the other hand, the spread of counterfeit coins was a problem from the onset, prompting the state to establish especially severe provisions against counterfeiting and issue the death penalty to ringleaders.[23]

That the *Wadō kaichin* spread throughout the Kinai region (containing the capital) and its environs can be gleaned from the state demanding coins as tax payment from the area. The coins circulated despite the fact that unlike the in-kind currencies in use up until that time, the government had unilaterally assigned an artificially high value to the copper coins. Why, then, did the coinage become accepted as a currency and go on to circulate throughout society in and around the capital?

This can be explained in part by the various policies enacted by the state to force the use of the new coinage. For example, in the tenth month of 712, the government ordered that the laborers and carriers coming into the capital from various districts be made to carry copper coins upon their return, and that in the districts along the roads, officials provision the returning workers with local rice in exchange for the coins they carried.[24] In other words, the state adopted policies that made district magistrates (*gunji*) and other regional elites supply rice in exchange for copper coins. By forcing the elite families of the countryside to collect the copper coins in the hands of corvée laborers traveling back and forth from the capital, and to shoulder the in-kind cost of provisioning them, the state expected that the use of the new currency would extend to the families themselves. Thus out in the provinces, district offices acted as nodes of currency distribution.

Additionally, the central role played by the temples of Heijō-kyō in promoting the use of coinage should not be overlooked. In the second volume of the early-Heian work *Nihon ryōiki*, Japan's oldest compendium of Buddhist didactic tales, there is a story set in the Nara period during the time of Emperor Shōmu (r. 724–749).[25] According to this tale, a resident of Heijō-kyō by the name of Nara Iwashima borrowed thirty *kan* of copper coins (30,000 coins) from the state-sponsored temple Daianji. From Heijō-kyō he traveled to Tsuruga harbor in Echizen (present-day Tsuruga City in Fukui prefecture), where he conducted trade at the port and made a profit. Although historically inaccurate, the story does suggest that the temples of the capital and the surrounding areas possessed copper coins in large sums, and that they generally made use of them for trade. Among the documents maintained in the Shosōin repository at Tōdaiji is a loan application drafted when the temple lent out five *kan* of copper coins (5,000 coins) as "*shōsen*" (literally "dealing coins"). Ostensibly this indicated that the coins were to be used for trade, and it appears that the use of temple-held coins for this purpose was actually being encouraged.[26] This is also made clear by the conclusion of the tale introduced above, which declared that "Nara Iwashima, owing to his borrowing of *shōsen* from the temple and conducting trade, was able to avert death."[27]

The temples of Heijō-kyō thus actively encouraged using the coins in their possession for commerce, and this in turn promoted the use of coinage in the capital. A significant number of the extant materials in the Shōsoin collection indicate that the economic life of the temple could not have been established without coins. Among these are an account book showing that coins acted as a means of exchange in the financial management of sutra-copying services, and the deed of a loan for pupils engaged in such services.[28]

By the latter half of the Nara period, the increase in the number of issuances and the spread of counterfeit coins had brought about an inflation of commodity prices and a corresponding fall in the value of coinage. In response, the state struck the *Mannen tsūhō* in 760, and assigned the new coinage ten times the value of the *Wadō kaichin*. Issued concurrently were the *Kaiki shōhō*, gold coins set at one thousand times the value of the *Wadō kaichin*, and the *Taihei genpō*, silver coins given one hundred times their value. An entry from the same day stated that "at

present, counterfeit coins are numerous, and account for half the money in circulation," and the new coinages were announced so as to curtail the spread of counterfeiting.[29]

The will of Fujiwara Nakamaro (706–764), the period's most powerful figure, was at work in the minting of new coins at this time. Nakamaro received the name Emi Oshikatsu in 758, and the emperor granted him special privileges, such as the right to issue coinage, the right to loan rice plants, and the right to use his own seal.[30] Nakamaro's acquisition of the right to mint coins, traditionally held to be part of the emperor's supreme authority, set the stage for the issuance of the three types of coinage discussed above. The coins suggest as well the admiration Nakamaro had for the products of Tang culture, as the group of characters printed on the three new coins (開基勝宝 for gold, 太平元宝 for silver, and 万年通宝 for copper) each borrow one character from the Tang dynasty's *Kaiyuan tongbao* (開元通寶) coinage.[31]

Incidentally, in the seventh month of 758 the Tang had struck the *Ganyuan chongbao* (Jap. *Kengen jūhō*), set at ten times the value of the *Kaiyuan tongbao*, and the *Chongshu ganyuan* (Jap. *Jūyu kengen*), at fifty times the value, to offset the financial difficulties resulting from the An Lushan Rebellion.[32] Nakamaro seems to have imitated this precedent, and implemented his own policy of currency reform in the Japanese archipelago.[33] It is likely that word of the new Tang coinages would have been brought to Nakamaro's attention together with information on the An Lushan Rebellion. Furthermore, from 759, the Fujiwara hegemon's plans for the conquest of the Korean kingdom of Silla were proceeding apace, and it is possible that efforts to cover the enormous military expenses of this state enterprise (later aborted) factored into the production of new coinages.[34] Either way, Nakamaro's currency reform was deeply intertwined with the shifting state of affairs in East Asia.

The *Mannen tsūhō* copper currency was abolished at the time of Nakamaro's political fall, and in 765 the *Jingū kaihō* was struck in its place.[35] The resolution of the Fujiwara no Nakamaro Rebellion in 764 and the changing of the era name to Tenpyō-Jingo were both closely connected to the issuance of this new coinage.[36] Nevertheless, among Nakamaro's monetary policies, the practice of setting the value of newly issued copper coins at ten times the value of the previous coinage was followed from the Heian period onward. In this sense, Nakamaro's initiatives can be said to have laid the foundation for coinage policy during the era that followed.

Coinage in the Heian period

Beginning with the *Ryūhei eibō* in 796, and concluding with the *Kengen taihō* of 958, the court struck nine different copper currencies in total during the Heian period.[37] It is likely that up through the *Jōgan eihō* coins issued in 870, each successive minting was carried out with the same intent as those in the Nara period, as a means of funding construction projects in the capital. From the 890 *Kanpyō taihō* onward, however, the connection to large-scale construction works cannot be confirmed in the historical sources, and it is thought the heretofore close relationship between coins and construction dissipated over time.[38]

Multiple historical sources support the notion that the *Jōgan eihō* coins were issued during a transitional period in Heian-era coinage policy. For one, the state laid out a new infrastructure for the minting of coins. It required for the first time offerings of copper from Bitchū and Bizen, and established a new mint at Kadono in Yamashiro province, designating the area as a production center for coins.[39] Meanwhile, the state became proactive in the recovery of older coins as a means of securing the raw copper needed for further coinages. In 867, the government ruled that the coins remaining in the provinces should be collected and supplied to the capital, whereupon the provinces would be compensated with the equivalent value in rice. Additionally, in 872, after the *Jōgan eihō* was minted, the government issued an edict stating that "Regarding the newly-minted *Jōgan eihō*,

as their characters are unclear and their manufacture coarse, reprimand the Office of the Mint, and make them properly."[40] The order shows the proactive attitude the government held toward circulation of the *Jōgan eihō*, a coinage that was the product of an ambition not seen before or after.

Although there had been an inseparable link between the construction of the capital city of Heian-kyō and the issuance of coinage, construction settled down from the middle of the ninth century, and the role coins played in the regular consumer activity of the capital grew in importance. The range of circulation gradually constricted, and ultimately became limited to Heian-kyō itself and the surrounding area. Among residents of the capital, the use of coins spread to the lower classes as compensation for labor or as economic aid to those in great poverty.[41] Nevertheless, the inflation of commodity prices meant that purchasing goods with coins was not necessarily simple. The classical state's issuance of coinage, in much the same manner as the change in era names, was enacted alongside the succession of a new emperor, and this ceremonial hue of coin production deepened over time.[42]

Over the generations, the quality of the coinage fell considerably as well: the circumference became smaller and the metal content changed, with the amount of copper decreasing and that of lead increasing. As a result, commoners increasingly avoided coins. An entry from the *Nihon kiryaku* dated to the eleventh month of 987 depicts the widespread shirking of coinage at the time, variously describing a crackdown by the Office of Imperial Police (*Kebiishi-chō*) in the capital against those refusing coins, and monks of the temples around Heian-kyō praying that the people make use of them.[43] This growing popular aversion, together with the weakening of the *ritsuryō* state's interest in minting and diminishing copper yields, led the government to halt further issuance of coinages in the latter half of the tenth century.

The use of coins was not completely abandoned, however, as they were still circulating inside Heian-kyō in the latter decades of the tenth century and beyond. Documents from 966, for example, contain descriptions suggesting the regular use of coinage.[44] Furthermore, the *Utsubo monogatari*, thought to date from around the close of the tenth century, includes scenes depicting the values for gifts and bets in games of *go* displayed in terms of coins, and it is thought likely that coins served as a standard for the display of values in Heian-kyō until the beginning of the eleventh century.[45] The move away from coins was in large part a result of the degradation in their quality, but memory of the utility of coins themselves remained. Thereafter, the use of coinage in the archipelago ceased, and silk and rice took on the function coins had performed in the capital area. From the middle of the twelfth century, coins once again came to circulate in the islands, this time through the influx of high-quality coins arriving from China.[46]

Conclusion

This chapter has principally discussed the coinages issued by the classical state, but the issues of where coins were used and who handled them are also important points worth considering.

As for the places coins circulated, aside from the markets established within the capital's walls, trade bases such as ports and markets developed in various locations. It was once hypothesized that markets were established in provincial capitals, and scholars advanced the concept of provincial trade spheres with these markets at the center of their development.[47] In recent years, however, a number of criticisms have been put forth, highlighting the need for renewed examination into how regional spheres of economic circulation developed in the classical period.[48]

Concerning the agents of circulation, Nara-era records confirm the existence of people engaged in long-distance trade (referred to as "*shōryo*"), and long-distance traders also appear frequently in the early-Heian *Nihon ryōiki*, as discussed above.[49] Sometime later, Fujiwara Akihira's *Shin sarugakuki*, dating to the latter eleventh century, tells the story of Hachirō-mauto, a

fictitious leader of merchants who traveled east to the "Land of Fushū" and west to the "Island of Kika," and describes him encouraging commercial activity as he crisscrossed the Japanese archipelago. The goods treated in the work are varied, including "Chinese products" (*karamono*) such as bishop wood, sappanwood, and rosewood, alongside domestic fare such as gold, silver, pearl oysters, sea snails, eagle feathers, and dyed leather, all of which circulated widely.[50] In this sketch of the merchant, active across an extensive area, we catch a glimpse of something qualitatively different from that of the Nara-period *shōryo*.

How did these merchants engaged in long-distance trade come into being? Kushiki Yoshinori adopts the position that the latter half of the tenth century was a pivotal period, the point at which a truly wide-ranging sphere of commodity circulation took shape.[51] The notion that the circulation of currency ceased precisely when an extensive network of commodity distribution was developing might at first seem strange. It could, however, be that the independent development of far-reaching commercial activity brought about a decline in the role of government-issued coins. Adopting this position, the latter tenth century, marked by the cessation of new coinage and the formation of extended commercial networks, can be thought of as a period of epochal change in the circulation of commercial goods. Further research will be required to deepen our understanding of the actual conditions of this time.

Notes

1 Kozo Yamamura and Kamiki Tetsuo, "Silver Mines and Sung Coins: A Monetary History of Medieval and Modern Japan in International Perspective"; Yamamura Kozo, "From Coins to Rice: Hypothesis on the Kandaka and Kokudaka Systems"; and "The Growth of Commerce in Medieval Japan." There are also a handful of articles by Japanese scholars that have been translated into English. The most relevant to our topic in this chapter is Sakaehara Towao's "Coinage in the Nara and Heian Periods," which appeared in a volume of *Acta Asiatica* (volume 39) devoted to the history of coinage. Sakaehara's article was the only one to address the classical period. Other Japanese scholarship in translation on coinage includes Honda Hiroyuki's "Copper Coinage, Ruling Power and Local Society in Medieval Japan," which discusses the efforts by daimyo and the Muromachi shogunate to deal with foreign and domestic counterfeit coins during the fifteenth century; Kuroda Akinobu's "Copper Coins Chosen and Silver Differentiated: Another Aspect of the 'Silver Century' in East Asia," on the same subject during the sixteenth century; and Wakita Haruko's "The Character of Japan's Trade with Ming: A Price-Centered View," which analyzes prices, exchange rates, and arbitrage trade between China and Japan in the late medieval period, discussing coins alongside precious metals and textiles.

2 These include Torao Toshiya and William Wayne Farris, "Nara Economic and Social Institutions"; Charlotte von Verschauer's *Across the Perilous Sea: Japanese Trade with China and Korea from the Seventh to the Sixteenth Centuries*; Bruce Batten's *Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War and Peace: 500–1300* and *To the Ends of Japan: Premodern Frontiers, Boundaries, and Interactions*; Suzanne Gay's *The Moneylenders of Late Medieval Japan*; Hitomi Tonomura's *Community and Commerce in Late Medieval Japan: The Corporate Villages of Tokuchin-Ho*; and Mary Elizabeth Berry's *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*.

3 The court changed the era name to Wadō ("Japanese copper") following the discovery of copper deposits in eastern Honshu.

4 *Nihon shoki*, 683 4/15.

5 Matsumura Keiji, "Fuhon shichiyōsen no saikentō," and Sakaehara Towao, *Nihon kodai senka kenkyū*, 59–99.

6 Mikami Yoshitaka, *Nihon kodai no kahei to shakai*, 28–30, and Tōno Haruyuki, *Kahei no Nihonshi*.

7 Kokuritsu rekishi minzoku hakubutsukan, *Okane no tamatebako: senka no rettō nisen'nenshi kikaku tenji*.

8 Kim Won-yong, *Bunei ōryō*.

9 The seven bodies were Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn, along with the sun and moon.

10 Sue ware (*sueki*, "offering vessel") was a type of unglazed pottery produced in Japan from the fifth through the tenth centuries, introduced to the archipelago through the Korean peninsula. Sue ware could serve a ritual function, but its production and use became more utilitarian over time.

11 Matsumura Keiji, "Mumon ginsen to Wadō ginsen: Asuka-Fujiwara chiiki shutsudo ginsen o chūshin ni"; Mikami Yoshitaka, *Nihon kodai no kahei to shakai*, 8–24; Mikami Ryūzō, *Kahei no tanjō: kōchōsen no hakubutsushi*; Imamura Keiji, *Fuhonsen to nazo no ginsen: kahei tanjō no shinsō*; Egusa Noritomo, "Kodai Nihon ni okeru gin to ginsen: Wadō kaichin no zengo."
12 Tōno Haruyuki, *Kahei no Nihonshi*.
13 For example, excavations in Shiga prefecture from the site of the former Sōfukuji temple, constructed in the latter half of the seventh century, have yielded *mumon ginsen* thought to have been used as interment materials. Similarly, silver ore serving the same purpose has been found at Kōfukuji, located on its present site since the early eighth century.
14 Iyanaga Teizō, *Nihon kodai shakai keizaishi kenkyū*, 388–426.
15 Mikami Yoshitaka, *Nihon kodai*, 72–101.
16 Musashi province corresponds to present-day Tokyo, and parts of Saitama and Kanagawa prefectures.
17 *Shoku Nihongi*, 708. The copper was presented on 1/11, the Office of the Mint established on 2/11, and the minting of silver and copper coins on 5/11 and 8/10, respectively.
18 Sakaehara, *Nihon kodai senka ryūtsūshi no kenkyū*, Ch. 1 (3–44).
19 Tōno, *Kahei*.
20 Sakaehara, *Nihon kodai senka ryūtsūshi no kenkyū*.
21 *Shoku Nihongi*, 711 5/15 for the exchange with rice and 712 12/7 for the exchange with cloth. Mori Akihiko maintains that the only official exchange established at the time of the *Wadō kaichin* was that ten copper coins were equal to one silver coin, which was in turn equal to one *bu* (0.375g) of unminted silver. See Mori, "Narachō shoki ni okeru Wadō kaichin no seikaku." A *shō* was a unit of volume originating in China, and its value increased over time, from about 0.2 liters to the approximately 1.8-liter measurement established by Toyotomi Hideyoshi in the sixteenth century which still holds today. This complicates attempts to represent its value at any given time prior to that, but in the eighth century, a *shō* appears to have corresponded to between 0.7 and 1.0 liters. A single *kida* of cloth measured just under four meters in length. The counter for individual coins was *mon*, with a string of 1,000 *mon* constituting one *kan*.
22 *Shoku Nihongi*, 711 (Wadō 4) 10/23.
23 See Kanazawa Etsuo, "Hachi, kyū seiki ni okeru senka no ryūtsū: Tokuni kigai o chūshin toshite" and Yamamoto Takashi, "Hachi seiki ni okeru chihō no senka no sonzai keitai."
24 *Shoku Nihongi*, 712 (Wadō 5) 10/29.
25 *Nihon ryōiki*, 247–251.
26 Shiraishi Hiroko, "'Ryōiki' kara mita enkyori kōeki" and Mikami Yoshitaka, *Nihon kodai*, 181–202.
27 *Nihon ryōiki*, 251.
28 For a discussion of the former, see Kuroda Yōko, "Hachi seiki ni okeru senka kinōron." For the latter, see Yoshikawa Toshiko, *Moji to kodai Nihon 3: Ryūtsū to moji*, and Mikami Yoshitaka, *Nihon kodai*.
29 *Shoku Nihongi*, 760 3/16.
30 *Shoku Nihongi*, 758 8/25.
31 For more on Nakamaro's interest in Tang culture, see Kishi Toshio, *Fujiwara no Nakamaro*.
32 For information on the An Lushan Rebellion, see Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*; Pulleyblank, "The An Lu-Shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism in Late T'ang China"; or Michael T. Dalby, "Court Politics in Late T'ang Times."
33 Kita Shinroku, "Narachō ni okeru senka no kachi to ryūtsū ni tsuite."
34 Egusa Noritomo, "Fujiwara no Nakamaro seikenka no senka hakkō to Shiragi seitō keikaku."
35 Teranishi Sadahiro, "Jingū-kaihō ryūtsū shiron: shakai, seijiteki ichikōsatsu."
36 The events of the Fujiwara no Nakamaro Rebellion are discussed in William Wayne Farris, *Heavenly Warriors: The Evolution of Japan's Military, 500–1300*, 69–77.
37 The full list consisted of: *Ryūhei eihō* (796), *Fūsū shinhō* (818), *Shōwa shōhō* (835), *Chōnen taihō* (848), *Jōeki shinhō* (859), *Jōgan eihō* (870), *Kanpyō taihō* (890), *Engi tsūhō* (907), and *Kengen taihō* (958).
38 Kitō Kiyoaki, "Heian shoki no senka ni tsuite."
39 *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*, 870 11/8. Bitchū and Bizen correspond to present-day Okayama prefecture, while Yamashiro formed the southern part of Kyoto prefecture.
40 *Nihon sandai jisturoku*, 925 9/25.
41 Hotate Michihisa, "Chūsei zenki no shinsei to kokahō," and Sakaehara, *Nihon kodai senka kenkyū*, 146–178.
42 Kanazawa Etsuo, "Nihon kodai ni okeru senka no tokushitsu."
43 *Nihon kirayku* 987 11/2.

44 *Kiyotane-ō shojō*, a collection of letters by the eponymous Kiyotane-ō sent to the former governor of Suō province. Not much is known about the author besides his being a member of the extended imperial family, but the letters' descriptions of commerce and state finance make them an important source for economic historians of the period. On the letters as evidence to the continued use of coins, see Mikami Yoshitaka, *Nihon kodai*, 127–180.
45 Takizawa Takeo, "Heian kōki no kahei ni tsuite"; and Tōno, *Kahei*.
46 Mikami Yoshitaka, *Nihon kodai*, 241–254; Egusa Noritomo, "Heian-ki ni okeru senka ryūtsū to toraisen"; Ihara Kesao, "Sōsen yunyū no rekishiteki igi: kokahō to senka suiko no hattatsu."
47 Sakaehara Towao, *Nara jidai ryūtsū keizaishi no kenkyū*, 3–60.
48 For criticisms of the notion of provincial trade spheres and the response to that criticism, see Sakaehara, *Nihon kodai senka kenykyū*, as well as Nakamura Shūya, *Nihon kodai shōgyōshi no kenkyū*, 65–89, and Miyakawa Maki, "Ritsuryō kokka no ichi shihai."
49 *Shoku Nihongi*, 714 2/27. For discussion of the *Ryōiki*, see Sakaehara, *Nara jidai*, 209–235.
50 *Shin sarugakuki*, 72–73.
51 Kushiki Yoshinori, "Shōnin to shōgyō no hassei."

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23
Knowledge of nature and craft
Researching the history of science, mathematics, and technology in Japan before 1600

Kristina Buhrman

The recent popularity of historical novels on pre-Meiji Japanese "scientists"—heroic men who strove to understand the natural world, before the word "scientist" or a Japanese equivalent had come into popular use—attests to public interest in the history of science in Japan.[1] Ubukata Tō's 2009 *Tenchi meisatsu*, which retold the life of Shibukawa Shunkai (1639–1715) and his 1684 Jōkyō calendrical reform, won the 2010 Bookseller's Award (*Hon'ya taishō*) and was adapted into a movie and a manga; more recently *Ōedo kyōryūden* by Yumemakura Baku and starring the historical figure Hiraga Gennai (1728–1780), known for his experiments with electricity, was serialized in a newspaper, then published in five volumes.[2] On the subject of science (or related fields) in early modern Japan, a number of recent notable works have appeared, covering the influence of optical instruments on the visual arts, the role of a tradition of "objective" natural illustration for the reception of photography, and the continuity between *honzōgaku* or "nature studies" in Edo-period Japan and the biological sciences after the Meiji Restoration.[3]

Such recent attention has not, however, been reflected in general histories of science in pre-Meiji Japan. Comprehensive histories have been slow to appear, despite calls and plans for their production. In the 2013 introduction to works in English on the history of science in Japan, Morris Low implies that such works may exist in Japanese but have yet to be translated. It is more accurate, however, to say that such histories have indeed been slow to appear even in Japanese, at least since an initial burst of activity in the 1960s. Many of the works available to English-speaking scholars, furthermore, reiterate the same basic material for the period before 1600 as can be found in these old histories.[4]

Few general overviews focus on the period before 1600; many, in fact, begin their coverage from around that time. And while studies of individual topics in the history of science in the premodern period have appeared, these new approaches have not yet been synthesized into a general work. Furthermore, many works that cover the premodern period often do so briefly and only as precursor to later developments. For this reason, older works have remained authoritative on this subject, in spite of paradigm shifts in historians' conceptualization of other aspects of the premodern era.[5]

Problems of the field

There are a number of reasons why the history of science in pre-1600 Japan is vastly overshadowed by the activity and interest in the history of science after 1600—reasons that have to do with some preoccupations of scholars in the field as well as those intrinsic to the topic itself. These issues include the definition of science, a focus on modernization theory, and the matter of sources for the study of science in premodern Japan.

While the term "science" would certainly seem to have an obvious definition, scholars working on the history of science in the West and in the sociology of science in a modern global context have pointed out the surprising difficulties involved in pinning it down.[6] Broadly taken, "science" refers to knowledge of the natural world. The authority of the concept is due to the fact that the knowledge of nature produced by science is taken to be true, or at least authoritative. But what counts as science, or in other words the proper object of a history of the subject (should knowledge gained from experience count, or only the rigorously theorized results of a complex experimental method?) determines how one might look at the history of science, particularly for places and peoples outside of western Europe.

For those who center the subject on the Western tradition stemming from the Scientific Revolution, there is little of interest in developments before the Meiji Period except the early importation of Western books, particularly through the Dutch-Learning (*Rangaku*) circle of scholars. This viewpoint leads to histories of science in Japan beginning in 1868 or 1854, after Japan was "opened" by Matthew Perry.[7] While in these works material from before 1868 or even 1600 may appear, they are presented as cultural background to the importation of Western knowledge—in such cases, the further from 1868 the material, the less relevant it is for such a history.

And yet, even when modern science, defined as deriving from the Scientific Revolution in Europe, is taken as the proper subject of a history of science, there are ways of defining the problem that make room for non-Western, non-modern objects of study. One such means of including the premodern in such a study is to look at what pre-existing factors in Japan may have helped, hindered, or shaped the adoption of Western science. In such works, for example, the flourishing mathematical field of *wasan* or Japanese mathematics in the Edo Period plays a role in the adoption of Western educational and scientific methods in the Meiji Period.[8] Such studies resemble other works influenced by modernization theory for early modern Japan. The current trend in scholarship on political, economic, and cultural history, however, has been to reject this focus, and this style of scholarship is out of step too with the field of the history of science as a whole.

Another way of including premodern Japan, or at least Asia, in the history of modern science is to look for contributions made to global knowledge or technology before the Scientific Revolution. In his early publications, Joseph Needham made a justification for the utility of studying "Chinese Science" in terms of the technological contributions (namely printing, gunpowder, and the compass) that, although part of the intellectual revolution in Europe, had their origins in China. In such a way, Needham made a case for the importance of premodern Chinese science as a contributor to a modern, "global" science—a distinct stream, but one that fed into a global ocean.[9]

While Japan shows up occasionally in the extensive *Science and Civilisation in China* series, Needham's justification for the study of Chinese science does not work as well for Japan: while "Chinese" (sometimes including Korean) texts and techniques made their way to the archipelago multiple times over the course of Japanese history, rarely was that flow reversed before the modern period, although this did not preclude a Chinese interest in or appreciation of Japanese-made goods.[10] For that reason alone, it is hard to envision any Japanese innovation or intellectual tradition that made it from Japan to become influential in medieval or early modern Europe.

Although Needham's project was well received by the Japanese history of science community, the interest in resemblances and precursors to modern science in Japanese history, driven largely by the interests of groups of Japanese scientists earlier in this century, has been much more influential. Given this preoccupation, it should be no surprise that the history of science in Japan not only began as a field of inquiry by scientists, but that scientists have continued to be major players in the field to this day.[11] Compared to the field of the history of science in Europe, the influence of scientist-historians on the field in the Japanese-language historiography is notably stronger.

There is a general divide between internalist (the view that change is driven by problems and developments within the field) and externalist (the position that change is driven by broader socio-economic and political factors) approaches in the history of science. One might also make a distinction between internally (written by practitioners of the science) and externally *produced* histories of science (undertaken by historians with more or less knowledge of the field being studied).[12] Although advantages can be found in all of these approaches, internally produced histories in particular have a tendency to read the preoccupations of the modern field into the records of the past, and project the mindset of the scientist backward onto historical actors. In internally produced histories, the standard for evaluating premodern techniques is usually modern scientific knowledge and methods. Certainly, comparing premodern results to those derived from modern scientific methods can be useful as a tool for comparison or for understanding knowledge from the past that requires two types of translation: not only linguistic, but also translating the paradigm in which such knowledge made sense for past actors. Familiarity with modern science can help scholars describe techniques for a wider, non-specialist audience: for example, chemistry and materials science are modern professional fields that do not have analogues in premodern Japan, yet they explain the factors that make certain metal alloys more rigid or more flexible, and so provide a way for the techniques of the past to be explained to readers in the present. It cannot be denied that it is useful for historians of premodern knowledge of nature and craft to know something of the relevant modern science or technology, to help make sense of what object it is that is being described or discussed.

There are, however, pitfalls to this sort of projection of modern perspectives onto the past. For example, a tenth-century diviner would have attached very different meanings and import to celestial phenomena than a modern astronomer would. Contrary to popular depictions of the history of science, these different meanings were not a matter of being unable to adequately explain or predict phenomena—although lunar eclipses were effectively predictable well before the tenth century, they still triggered the regular commission of Buddhist ceremonies and other apotropaic rituals.[13] A further weakness of this approach is that it divides up knowledge based on modern fields of study (as well as on modern distinctions of what is and is not science).

Another issue is that focus on modern fields can lead to rather truncated histories that do not reach far into the premodern era. Descriptions of chemistry or physics are a case in point, for knowledge of how to manipulate materials to make new ones (metallurgy) and at least a non-theorized awareness of properties of fluid dynamics (for irrigation) and properties of motion (what is sometimes called "naïve physics") must be presumed to have been present among the Japanese by ancient times.[14] Furthermore, placing modern boundaries on what should be considered in the history of science also takes material out of context: as when scholars preserve the observations of the night sky or a sick patient, while deleting descriptions of the divination process or the rituals that were also part of the work of the premodern specialist or technician.

Still another danger to an internalist approach is conceptual. A focus on modern fields of scientific knowledge and practice has fallen out of favor in current trends in the history of science as a whole. While the popular history of science is still focused on how modern science came to be, centered on the Scientific Revolution in Europe, historians of science have brought the existence

of a single Scientific Revolution into question.[15] De-centering the Scientific Revolution from the history of science has allowed, accordingly, for the investigation of medieval and early modern fields of knowledge on their own terms. In such a way, "alchemy" and "chemistry" can be examined within the shifting boundaries of the time, instead of looked at as precursors to modern chemistry.[16] The history of science in Japan in the archaic and classical periods does examine the terms native to the *ritsuryō* system for the fields of mathematics, medicine, and astronomy: but it has yet to build a picture of the shifting map of knowledge defined by historical Japanese terms.

The general scarcity of written sources for this earlier period is one more reason there has been less activity in the study of the history of science and technology in premodern Japan, compared to the history of science in modern or even early modern Japan. Although the field of the history of science put generally has broadened its reach, turning toward a more externalist and constructionist approach, the classic object of study among historians of science has long been the specialist's treatise. Unfortunately, few such works survive from premodern Japan. Indeed, apart from essays on medicine, there are only three texts dedicated to subjects equivalent to our fields of science or mathematics, and none on technology, known to have been composed before the end of the fifteenth century.[17] Of the three works, furthermore, only the 1414 *Rekirin mondōshū*, described by some authors as Japan's first surviving work on astronomy, is extant. The number of available treatises could be increased by adjusting the boundaries of what we consider "science" to include works on divination (particularly mathematically and astrologically based techniques), or by including works such as the 1346 *Isei teikin ōrai* (a collection of examples for correspondence), which include technical or mathematical content (in the example above, mathematical games).[18] Even with such adjustments, however, the number of "scientist"-authored sources remains few. For this reason, the history of scientific or technical knowledge in Japan before the late sixteenth century must largely be based on mentions of individuals or techniques in other sources, visual depictions, archeological evidence—or on imported texts.[19]

Accordingly, much of the work done on the history of science before the Edo period (1603–1868) has relied upon Chinese texts. Bibliographies and mentions of particular texts in decrees or diaries provide a guide to works that can be plumbed for evidence on what knowledge and concepts were at least *available* to individuals living in Japan.

While useful, this approach also has drawbacks about which the historian must be aware. When done carelessly, without consideration of who had access to such texts, or how they might have been received, it can be easy to overgeneralize from the content, or to assume that Japanese readers took the material in such texts exactly as the Chinese authors intended.[20] Without writings or comments by individual specialists, it is hard to even judge how Chinese scientific texts were received, and the result is that even studies on the impact of Chinese science and technical knowledge on Japan tend to focus on the Edo period, when the sources for such research are much richer, thanks to a greater survival of texts with the advent of print culture.[21]

The heavy emphasis among historians on early modern developments also reflects intellectual and social changes that occurred during the period. Although one could argue that there was no scientific revolution in Japan, it is certainly true that, in terms of developments and the individuals and social groups involved (or at least our knowledge of them), the situation changed dramatically in the transition to the early modern period. Much interesting work has been done on developments that occurred after this transition.[22] What, however, can be said for the centuries before?

Sugimoto and Swain: waves of influence

Having discussed some of the difficulties of the field above, it is worth considering them alongside the historical paradigm presented by Masayoshi Sugimoto and David L. Swain's *Science and*

Culture in Traditional Japan (1978, reprinted 1989). Although it is more focused on the early modern period, the volume remains a useful and (owing to the dearth of other works in English) authoritative overview of the history of Japanese science before 1600, even as its descriptions of social and political developments have gone out of date. The book's main argument is that the history of science (and by implication, technology) in Japan followed upon the history of Japan's engagement with the world. To this end, the authors divide Japanese history into five periods representing "waves of cultural influx": a Chinese cultural wave from 600 to 894, a "semi-seclusion era" from 894 to 1401, and second Chinese cultural wave from 1401 to 1639, a period of national isolation peaking of the second Chinese wave from 1639 to 1720, and a "challenge to isolation" and "shift from traditional to modern science" from 1720 onward.[23]

The authors trace periods of contact and resulting developments in Japanese practice for the fields of astronomy, mathematics, and medicine as representative for the history of Japanese science, in order to present a story of how engagement with the world drove Japanese progress and innovation, even in the premodern era. A closer look at Sugimoto and Swain's periodization, however, shows the ways in which their explanatory model determines the periods; rather the appearance of texts or techniques.

First, consider the end date for "Chinese Wave I: ca. 600–894." The end date for this epoch represents the year in which official missions to China were formally abandoned, but material in Sugimoto and Swain's own discussion undermines this periodization. The major developments of this era were the establishment of official organs of learning and practice within the court for all three fields by the *ritsuryō* legal and administrative codes. Nevertheless, with the exception of some post-894 developments to be discussed shortly, the last developments the authors discuss for medicine and mathematics date to 808, and for astronomy in 862.[24] Both dates fall within the period covered by the Six National Histories (*Rikkokushi*), and in fact the material cited by the authors for all three fields comes from these sources—as does most of the information for this early period of Chinese influence. In other words, the apparent end of a period of interest and activity in Chinese fields of study may be as much an artifact of the historical record as a reflection of actual changes in intellectual engagement.[25]

Their explanatory model, emphasizing engagement with the continent, also means that Sugimoto and Swain attribute later developments as "aftereffects" of the "Chinese Wave I." A case in point is the *Ishinpō* medical text, composed in the late tenth century, but shoehorned into this earlier period of influence in Sugimoto's and Swain's treatment.[26] Horoscope astrology (*sukuyōdō*) also gets incorporated into this earlier period, attributed to the transmission of Buddhist texts from China by Kūkai (774–835) and Ennin (794–864). Scholarship subsequent to Sugimoto and Swain has, however, emphasized that interest in astrology in Japan, and the techniques that made it a feasible method of mathematical astronomical calculation were only implemented after some of the relevant texts were re-imported in the tenth century.[27] The technological impetus for the development of horoscope astrology, therefore, was not so much the texts first imported in the ninth century, but instead the expertise transmitted by Buddhist monks who had traveled to China in the tenth—within the period when Japan was, according to Sugimoto and Swain, largely cut off from foreign contact. Although the emphasis on Japanese science and technology as part of a Chinese tradition is largely correct, the periodization of Japanese science found in this work needs revision.

Sugimoto and Swain's focus on textually based elite investigations of nature and mathematics also needs to be reevaluated, in light of more recent studies suggesting that technological developments may have had a greater effect on more individuals in Japanese history.[28] Archeological discoveries continue, and techniques for analyzing material culture (such as the alloys in swords, for example) in less destructive ways increase our knowledge of premodern

Japanese technology, engineering, and agriculture. As a result, incorporating these fields into our history of science in Japan becomes more feasible, although then the historian must also possess the technical knowledge to interpret these results. While the influence of Chinese technologies at moments of greater openness—the early *ritsuryō* period and the late medieval era—remains part of the histories of iron-working or carpentry, internal developments driven by social change in Japan at other times must also be factored into the equation.[29]

Furthermore, the history of astronomy in Heian and Kamakura Japan, problematizes the depiction of Japan from 894 to 1401 as secluded (even "semi-secluded") enough to have prevented Chinese texts or developments from getting there. Certainly a depiction of early medieval Japan as "semi-secluded" goes against the grain of current scholarship: while it is possible to portray the late classical and early medieval period connection to the continent as minor in terms of the quantity of objects and persons coming across, or in terms of a lack of newly composed Chinese literature documented in Japanese aristocratic libraries, unofficial links to the continent inarguably continued to have significant effects on Japanese practices.[30] Twelfth-century debates on the winter solstice, for example, included discussion of new techniques for astrology, and newly imported equations for mathematical astronomy were employed for predicting a solar eclipse in 1228.[31]

Nevertheless, during the period from 862 to 1684 the Japanese court failed to officially adopt a new astronomical system for calculating the calendar, a fact that historians have tended to interpret as a sign of stagnation or a lack of interest in science. Like many scholars before them, Sugimoto and Swain appear to have assumed that developments in science or technology in China uniformly represented improvements or progress, and that this must have been obvious to observers and actors at the time—meaning that if new developments were not embraced by the Japanese, some force had to have been hindering adoption. For Sugimoto and Swain, the logical culprit was the cessation of official missions to China.[32]

These are positivist assumptions, and are not necessarily borne out by the historical record, however.[33] The court was active during the late Heian and Kamakura periods in hearing objections to and tests of official mathematical astronomy. They simply chose not to adopt the Chinese innovations.[34]

On the other hand, what Sugimoto and Swain's work correctly emphasizes is the way in which the history of Japanese science and technology is deeply entwined with and indebted to the history of science and technology in China and Korea. While a historian looking for "Japanese science" might want to focus on innovations and developments unique to the archipelago, in many ways Japanese intellectuals and technicians were working in a larger sphere that was once called Chinese Science, but which is now, in recognition of its larger geographical context, called East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine.[35] The transfer of Chinese, Korean, and Indian (and perhaps Islamic) concepts and technologies to Japan is perhaps the major topic for the history of Japanese science and technology before 1600, although this transfer should not be assumed to have been automatic, nor necessarily successful.

Toward a new history of science in premodern Japan

Creating a new survey of the histories of science and technology in Japan that includes the premodern period is a daunting task, but one that will hopefully bear fruit in coming years. Since the 1970s, a number of specialized works on the history of science and technology in Japan have appeared. In mathematics and astronomical journals, scientists have continued to reconstruct old methods and evaluate them against the new. Broader definitions of "technology" and "science"—definitions that cover all varieties of knowledge associated with the natural and material world,

not merely those corresponding to modern scientific constructs—have brought cosmology and other concepts previously regulated to the study of Japanese religion into the discussion as well.[36]

Other new sources have also been included in this project, notably from material culture. Archeologists have added new information to the history of mining and metalworking in Japan, and in other fields discoveries have shown that even when a more efficient or effective technology was available, it did not necessarily displace precursors.[37] These new sources do not necessarily lead to the sort of precisely dated histories that readers in other fields are used to, but they provide vital information about knowledge of and interaction with the material world outside the sphere of elites.[38]

Some of these shifts in scholarship are long-standing but have yet to be worked into comprehensive histories of science and technology in Japan. The use of sources beyond treatises and official histories began before the 1970s, with the work of astronomers mining courtier diaries and unofficial chronicles for information about the stars. More recently the ways in which these non-specialist sources reveal changes in specialist practice have come to attention. The history of mathematics has already been opened up beyond mere analysis of treatises to general numeracy and counting techniques.[39] Certainly, the archives of temples may yet reveal new texts not yet well-known in the history of science or mathematics, which will further shed light on the period between the official histories of Japan and the print revolution of the early modern period—particularly if scholars do not assume that religion means a rejection of science. Even if such treatises or teaching texts are slow or fail to emerge, new approaches to materials and targets of study mean that new work in the field can be done.

There is need, too, to take up an insight from the past two decades in the history of medieval and early-modern Western science, to redraw the map of how knowledge and skills were organized in premodern Japan.[40] Previous studies have included discussion of the ways in which knowledge was organized within the *ritsuryō* bureaucracy, but this has not yet been the focus of adequate inquiry. The ways in which knowledge of calculation, the stars, and other subjects was divided up within the bureaucracy will provide useful insights about specialization and expertise in the classical world. Comparison of this new classical model to one that does the same with the medieval world of guilds (*za*) and other quasi-professional experts and technicians will reveal new ways to examine social changes in that historical transition. The techniques and material knowledge found in the trades and crafts—among Buddhist sculptors or merchants, for example—will further clarify the social history of knowledge in premodern Japan and help incorporate these less textual fields into a broader history of Japanese science.

Such a new history of science in premodern Japan will require more coordination and effort among scholars of a number of fields. If science can be defined as "views about the natural world" and technology as "a productive action on some form of matter in social context," the work of the historian of science and technology becomes more challenging.[41] Not only scientists but also nobles, artisans, farmers, and merchants become the subjects of study; and not only texts but also chemical analyses and archeological reconstructions must be consulted. The value of such an approach is, however, in the contribution that such a history might make to the history of premodern Japan as a whole.

Instead of focusing on the question of how the ground was prepared for science in Meiji and post-Meiji Japan, this new approach to the premodern history of science in Japan will provide information on how individuals and groups understood, interacted with, and manipulated the world around them. The boundaries between the history of science and technology, and the histories of other subjects—environmental history, art history, agricultural history, to name a few—will blur. The utility of the project, however, will grow commensurately.

Notes

1 On the relatively recent development of the English word and European equivalents, see Sydney Ross, "'Scientist': The Story of a Word."
2 General information on Gennai in English can be found in Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan: From the Seventeenth to the Twenty-first Century*. Yumemakura Baku is perhaps best known for his *Onmyōji* novel series about Abe no Seimei (921–1005), although he has written series about other historical characters before Gennai. Shibukawa's personal name can be alternately read as Harumi, as it is in Masayoshi Sugimoto and David L. Swain, *Science and Culture in Traditional Japan*.
3 Timon Screech, *The Lens Within the Heart: The Western Scientific Gaze and Popular Imagery in Later Edo Japan* (2002); Maki Fukuoka, *The Premise of Fidelity: Science, Visuality, and Representing the Real in Nineteenth-century Japan* (2012); Federico Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan* (2015).
4 Morris Low, "Japan: General Works." Although Masayoshi Sugimoto and David L. Swain's 1978 *Science and Culture in Traditional Japan* dates from the subsequent decade, its contents effectively match material found in works such as Sugimoto Isao, *Kagakushi* (1967).
5 The one major exception to the near dearth of generalized studies on premodern science is a survey of the history of mathematics by Ōya Shin'ichi, *Wasan izen*, which takes as its task and premise the explanation of mathematics *before* the development of the early modern *wasan* tradition exemplified by Seki Takakazu (1642–1708). In most surveys in which the pre-1600 period appears, it is safe to say that the premodern era is presented as ground or build-up against which to contrast the developments of the early modern age. The historical work of the astronomer Saitō Kuniji (including *Kotenmongaku no sanpomichi: tenmon shiryō kenshō yowa*) in the 1980s, greatly built upon by the historian Hosoi Hiroshi (particularly the articles written with Minezaki Ryōichi, "Rikkokushi mishūroku no nisshoku to kokushi" and "Nihon tenmon shiryō mishūroku no nisshoku to kiroku"), used courtier diary sources and later chronicles to show that the post-ninth-century practice of mathematical or calendrical astronomy was more active than Nakayama Shigeru (*A History of Japanese Astronomy: Chinese Background and Western Impact*), and consequently Sugimoto and Swain who rely greatly on Nakayama's work, presume. Sugimoto and Swain, *Science and Culture in Traditional Japan* remains the standard reference in English-language works. *Meiji-zen Nihon kagakushi* series (a summary of the project and an outline of a history of science and technology in Japan) can be found in Nihon gakushiin, Nihon kagakushi kankōkai, *Meiji-zen Nihon kagakushi sōsetsu nenpyō*).
6 On the difficulties, even impossibility, of defining science, see the introductions to Peter Dear, *The Intelligibility of Nature: How Science Makes Sense of the World*, and Thomas F. Gieryn, *The Cultural Boundaries of Science: Credibility on the Line*.
7 *Rangaku* has long been a subject of interest in the intellectual history of Japan, as attested by a relatively early Ph.D. dissertation on the subject (Yoshida Tadashi, "The Rangaku of Shizuki Tadao: The Introduction of Western Science in Tokugawa Japan"), although recent work has tended to focus on its influence on art history. A study of how the Dutch connection was important for the history of medicine in the late Edo Period can be found in Ann Bowman Jannetta, *The Vaccinators: Smallpox, Medical Knowledge, and the "Opening" of Japan*. In Japanese, a typical work of Edo Period science, which dismisses the possibility of science in pre-1600 Japan, is Nakamura Kunimitsu, *Edo kagaku shiwa*. For an example of a history of science that begins with the "opening" of Japan to the West, see Honda Ichiji, *Nihon no kagaku hyakunen*. Such a periodization dismisses the importance of Rangaku scholarship, emphasized by the scholars above.
8 An example of this approach can be found in the pre-war Kokuritsu kagaku hakubutsukan, *Edo jidai no kagaku*.
9 While the contribution to modern "global" science was the initial justification presented by Joseph Needham for the study of the history of Chinese science (*The Grand Titration: Science and Society in East and West*), this pre-occupation is less strongly present in later volumes of the *Science and Civilisation in China* series that he spearheaded, in which the subject itself serves as its own justification.
10 Most notably, Japan appears in the mathematics section and in the volume on ceramics in Needham's *Science and Civilisation in China*. Chinese elites seem to have had an appreciation for Japanese swords and paper products (Charlotte von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea: Japanese Trade with China and Korea from the Seventh to the Sixteenth Centuries*), although Japan's raw materials were perhaps the bulk of such trade (see also Yasuko Suzuki, *Japan–Netherlands Trade 1600–1800: The Dutch East India Company and Beyond* and Robert I. Hellyer, *Defining Engagement: Japan and Global Contexts, 1640–1868* on the effects of, and thus the scope of, Japan's international metal trading in the early modern period). The largely

unidirectional flow of texts, if not also ideas, can be seen in Buddhist contexts as well (see Enomoto Wataru, *Sōryo to kaishōtachi no higashi shinakai*).

11 Togo Tsukahara et al., "Needham's Impact on Japanese History of Science." In the subject of astronomy, Shinjō Shinzō (1873–1938), a major figure in the foundation of the Kyoto school of the history of science, was an astronomer and physicist (Tsukuhara et al., "Needham's Impact on the Japanese History of Science"), and many of the articles included in the *Meiji zen* series for the history of Japanese science and technology included scientists by training over historians by training (see, for example, Nihon gakushiin, Nihon kagakushi kankōkai, *Meiji-zen Nihon butsuri, kagaku shi*, where among the volumes, this trend may be the most pronounced. Astronomers who have continued to play a significant role in the history of Japanese science include Saitō Kuniji.

12 Nakayama sees Thomas Kuhn, to provide a famous name in the history of science, as attempting to reconcile both approaches: he presents his own project as within that framework. Shigeru Nakayama, *Academic and Scientific Traditions in China, Japan and the West*, xiv–xvi.

13 Sakka Kazuyuki, *Tenpen no kaidoku monotachi*, offers a good example of anachronistic assumptions about the premises on which premodern "scientists" operated.

14 Most of the entries in Nihon gakushiin, Nihon kagakushi kankōkai, *Meiji-zen Nihon butsuri, kagaku shi* truncate the period covered on the principle of identifying the past material as part of the modern field of scientific inquiry.

15 Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution*.

16 Katharine Park and Lorraine Daston, "Introduction: The Age of the New," and William R. Newman, "From Alchemy to 'Chymistry'."

17 I am including in this count a work not often mentioned by these scholars, Kamo Yasunori's *Rekirin*, which is supposed to have been the basis for his descendant's *Rekirin mondōshū*. See note 26 below.

18 *Rekirin mondōshū* (1414) by Kamo Aritkata is identified by both Nakayama and Sugimoto and Swain as the first work by a Japanese author on mathematical astronomy. Here, however, we see the biases of modern scholars. This work handles some of the calendrical concepts of the almanac that reference to astronomical bodies and motion, and was written by an individual in charge of calendar making and astronomical prediction at court; however, it is just as much, if not more, a work focused on divination and day-selection. If this text can be counted as a pre-1600 work of Japanese science, then multiple other *onmyōdō*-related works also could be included in our count. A number of these works, and their textual history, can be found in Nakamura Shōhachi, *Nihon on'yōdō-sho no kenkyū*, which includes a critical edition of Arikata's text (an improvement on the edition found in the *Gunsho ruijū* collection). Works by *yamabushi* on rituals for and legends associated with crafts such as carpentry could increase the number of texts to study even further, and would bring the history of technology into the field. On this genre, see Fabio Rambelli, "Tools and Labor as Mediators between the Sacred and the Profane," although his use of them differs than their potential use for the history of technology.

19 The survey of technology (and mathematics) found in Keiji Nagahara and Kōzō Yamamura, "Shaping the Process of Unification: Technological Progress in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century Japan" uses manuscripts and printed texts from the late sixteenth through the seventeenth centuries to reconstruct some of the techniques and trends evident through the development of new mines or techniques known from archeology or brief mentions in other historical sources.

20 The idea that science or technology ("technology transfer," a concept used not just in modern studies of technology and society, but also by Iida Ken'ichi in "Kodai Nihon no kinzoku bunka" to describe how iron mining and smelting techniques spread from China to Japan) move smoothly and without change between cultures has been questioned by recent scholarship (Eden Medina et al., "Introduction: Beyond Imported Magic"). In the East Asian sphere, Benjamin Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550–1900* is a study of how elite intellectuals in Late Imperial China adopted (or did not adopt) and adapted material from Western (initially Jesuit) sources.

21 For an illustration of work on technology transfer during the early modern period, see the papers in the first section of Yoshida Tadashi and Li Yanju, *Kagaku gijutsu*.

22 The change in social consciousness produced by print culture is described in Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period*; although the effects of this change on the production of science have been less analyzed, it is safe to assume that they were analogous. The development of a Japanese print culture required more than technical developments, which were known in Japan earlier (Peter Kornicki, *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century*). A useful model for the role of print in the history of science in the West is Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern*

Europe—this function of print, at least in its early stages, however, has been critiqued by Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Printing and Knowledge in the Making*. The same argument regarding early modern change is made to more surprising effect in the history of science in Europe. See, for example, Marcon, *Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge*, 24–26.

23 The influence of European texts on Japanese culture is largely a phenomena of the early modern period, and so I will not consider it here. Nakayama does look at some of the earlier attempts to handle Western astronomy in *A History of Japanese Astronomy* which, temporally, fall within the time period addressed in this chapter—this shows the ways in which attempts at strictly bounded periodization are thwarted by historical realities.

24 For mathematics, a change to courses of study in the Bureau of Higher Learning (Daigaku-ryō, ironically the addition of the field of *kidendō* or Japanese history) (Sugimoto and Swain, *Science and Culture in Traditional Japan*, 83); for medicine, the presentation of the *Daidō ruijūhō* manual, no longer extant (88); and for astronomy, the adoption of the Xuanming-li (Jp. Senmyō-reki) system of mathematical astronomy for calculating the official calendar (51).

25 As mentioned above, changes in the historiographic record may also accord with changes in society, and so these should not be thought of as mutually exclusive. It should be noted that the strong influence of the Six National Histories on shaping a history of science is not unique to this work, for typically timelines of Japanese science that include the premodern period draw explicitly from these sources. Beyond the years covered in these texts, specifically dated entries in historians' timelines decrease. See the timelines at the end of Sugimoto Isao, *Kagakushi* and in Nihon gakushiin, Nihon kagakushi kankōkai, *Meiji-zen Nihon kagakushi sōsetsu, nenpyō*.

26 Similarly, the 1414 *Rekirin mondōshū* is attributed to Ming Neo-Confucian influence, instead of its explicitly credited (and now lost) tenth-century model. Sugimoto and Swain, *Science and Culture in Traditional Japan*, 198.

27 Sugimoto and Swain explicitly mention the lack of influence on "astronomical science," citing Nakayama, *A History of Japanese Astronomy*, on page 128. Papers gathered in Momo Hiroyuki *Rekihō no kenkyū* identified the importance of the 950 importation of the Futian-li (Jp. Futen-reki) for mathematical astronomy in Japan. Since then, Yano Michio, *Mikkyō senseijutsu: Sukuyōdō to Indo senseijutsu* and *Hoshiuranai no bunka kōyrūshi* has analyzed horoscope astrology and its links to the continent in more detail. Emphasis on the role that horoscope astrologers had on the calculation of eclipses even among non-Buddhist practitioners can be found in Saitō, *Kotenmongaku no sanpomichi*.

28 Nagahara and Yamamoto, "Shaping the Process of Unification."

29 Iida, "Kodai Nihon no kinzoku bunka"; Nihon gakushiin, Nihon kagakushi kankōkai, *Meiji-zen Nihon kōgyō gijutsu hattatsushi* for iron-mining and working; William Coaldrake, *The Way of the Japanese Carpenter: Tools and Japanese Architecture* on tools and techniques in carpentry.

30 See, for example, von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea*. Bruce Batten, *Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War and Peace, 500–1300*; and Ivo Smits, "The Way of the Literati: Chinese Learning and Literary Practice in Mid-Heian Japan" both point out the ways that contact between Japan and China (or between Japanese and Chinese texts) were limited, but this does not negate the influence of what contact occurred, as can be seen in Andrew Goble, *Confluences of Medicine in Medieval Japan: Buddhist Healing, Chinese Knowledge, Islamic Formulas, and Wounds of War*, and the contributions in Goble et al., *Tools of Culture: Japan's Cultural, Intellectual, Medical, and Technological Contacts in East Asia, 1000–1500*.

31 Momo Hiroyuki, *Rekihō no kenkyū*, vol. 2: 61–103. The system used in the 1228 attempt was the Qintian-li of the Southern Song. *Hyakuren-shō* Antei 2/6/1.

32 Sugimoto Isao blames *kokufū* (Japanese-culture) centrism (*Kagakushi*); Shigeru Nakayama primarily blames Buddhism (*A History of Japanese Astronomy*).

33 The complicated history of how eclipse predictions and other astronomical calculations were evaluated are the topics of chapters three through six of Kristina Buhrman, "The Stars and the State: Astronomy, Astrology, and the Politics of Natural Knowledge in Early Medieval Japan." What the debates at court over eclipse prediction make clear is how even failed predictions were not necessarily sufficient to convince an audience at the time that the system for making the predictions was in need of replacement—a violation of the positivist mode of the history of science also found in the history of modern Western science. See Steven Shapin, "Cordelia's Love: Credibility and the Social Studies of Science."

34 By the late Kamakura period, the establishment of locally produced calendars presented a practical reason why the adoption of a new system for mathematical astronomy was not successfully adopted—the 1684 Jōkyō-reki reform may be as much a testament to the Tokugawa shoganate's political pull as it is to Shibukawa Harumi's mathematical genius.

35 Reflecting this shift, the title of one of the specialized journals in the field, *East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine* changed its name to that from *Chinese Science* in 1999.
36 See, for example, the work on Five Phase cosmology by Yoshino Hiroko, explicitly "Nihonjin no kazu shinkō"; also Takemitsu Makoto, "Kodai Nihon no saii shisō to tōzai bunbu."
37 See the discussion of unidirectional two-men frame saws in Coaldrake, *The Way of the Carpenter*, 130–137.
38 See, for example, the three stages of the development of Japanese iron-working, from the second through the eighth centuries, in Iida, "Kodai Nihon no kinzoku bunka." He dates these stages roughly by century and somewhat vaguely.
39 Kanda Shigeru, *Nihon tenmon shiryō*. Saitō, first in his *Kotenmongaku no sanpōmichi*, and then in later works including *Kotenmongaku no sanpōmichi*, was perhaps the first to adopt the new approach, followed shortly thereafter by Hosoi and Minekawa, "Rikkokushi mishūroku no nisshoku to kokushi" and "Nihon tenmon shiryō mishūroku no nisshoku to kiroku." I attempted to follow their lead in Buhrman, "The Stars and the State." For an example of the new history of mathematics, see Ōya, *Wasan izen*.
40 Park and Daston, "Introduction: The Age of the New."
41 See the discussion of the project in the introduction by Itō Shuntarō in his edited volume, *Nihon no kagaku to bunmei: Jōmon kara gendai made*. The definition of technology is from Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*, 15–16.

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24
Agriculture and food production

Charlotte von Verschuer

Agriculture was the dominant activity in most societies until the twentieth century. It still remains, as recently as 2003, the largest economic sector with 40 percent of the active world population working in agriculture. Food security has become a primary concern for contemporary societies, which will need to double crop production by the year 2050 in order to feed the world's population.

The conventional understanding regarding the agricultural history of Japan assigns a basic role to rice cultivation, and evaluates rice fields as symbolizing the country's land and the society. Japanese school textbooks present early society, from the first centuries CE, with images of people preparing paddy fields with hoes or transplanting the rice seedlings in irrigated fields. To travelers who arrive at Narita Airport, the landscape all the way along the train route to Tokyo offers immediate sights of irrigated or harvested rice fields.

Irrigated rice is indeed a special feature in Japan, as in other Asian countries. Yet it is too easy to forget that rice growing is not Japan's only form of cultivation, and that it has always been one of many types of food production in Japan. Indeed, agriculturally, Japan had a polyculture combining irrigated rice, dry crops, swidden cultivation as well as the gathering of plant foods. But these practices have not often been given due attention in Japanese historiography. Instead, the bulk of research has focused on rice cultivation. This chapter will present an overview of the academic perceptions on Japanese agricultural history over the past decades. Let us first consider the data on rice.

Irrigated rice

Irrigated rice cultivation was transmitted to the Japanese archipelago in the early first millennium BCE. The earliest paddy fields were located in southwestern Japan, along the northern coastal regions of Kyushu. The newly introduced technique of irrigated rice then followed a long journey up to northeastern Honshu. Archaeological remains of hydraulic systems (irrigation channels, dykes, and dams) discovered outside Kyushu show great differences in time and space with regard to the pace at which the regions of Honshu adopted irrigated rice cultivation over subsequent centuries. From the 2000s, therefore, archaeologists have distanced themselves from the traditional view of a Japanese archipelago that converted thoroughly and

speedily to a rice-growing society at the dawn of the Yayoi period (from the early first millennium BCE to the late third century CE).[1]

Rice cultivation entered the historical records from the seventh century. From the seat of the royal court in the Kinai region of central Honshu, the Yamato rulers carried out land surveys and population censuses throughout the realm, and forced irrigated rice growing on the entire population. The Yamato court also adopted from Tang China the *ritsuryō* system of administrative state institutions. In these administrative codes, rice was decreed to be the base for the fiscal economy and the land system.

The Yamato court undertook large-scale public works in the central region from the seventh century. And from the eighth century, the great monasteries and noble elites initiated countless irrigation works on their private estates in the provinces. Rice paddies need to be leveled in order to maintain an even water depth for nourishing the rice during the growing period. Thus land clearing projects and the management of irrigation facilities continued through all periods of history, and were carried out by land proprietors, court elites, and provincial powers. Taxes on agricultural product and land all were assessed in terms of rice. Irrigated rice served as the basic state income.[2] It eventually continued to provide the main accounting device in the public economy until the end of the Edo period.

The period of the tenth to sixteenth centuries is generally considered to be a time of significant agrarian expansion in Japan marked by repeated land clearance campaigns sponsored by local governments and landlords. This general view however needs some verification. According to ancient dictionaries from the tenth to fourteenth centuries, the provinces of the entire realm amounted to 900,000 to 1.1 million hectares of rice fields. The figures in censuses then jump to 1.6 million hectares in 1600 and to 2.9 million hectares in 1700. These figures have formerly been interpreted as an expansion in rice production that has in turn been explained by technical advances. Yet it has been overlooked that these data only partially reflect reality.

From the 1980s Kuroda Hideo and Kimura Shigemitsu did innovative research on dry grains. Until then, agriculture had been perceived as synonymous with irrigated rice cultivation and archaeological and historical research ignored millet. By scrutinizing the historical records of the tenth to fifteenth centuries, however, Kimura has shown that millet was abundantly grown in all provinces. He has drawn attention to the fact that medieval dictionaries registered only taxable rice paddies, and failed to register dry fields. It was only after the agrarian reforms of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598) in 1598 that non-irrigated fields, i.e., permanent dry fields, entered public accounting. The figures available to us, therefore, compare on one hand an agricultural base of around 900,000 hectares of rice paddies alone for the earlier period up to the fourteenth century, with, on the other hand, 1.6 million hectares of total arable land (including both irrigated and dry fields) for around 1598. In contrast, the figures after 1598 do reveal a net expansion of total arable land from 1.6 to 2.9 million hectares by 1720. The data of the ancient dictionaries, then, suggest a rather stable acreage of irrigated rice paddies during the medieval period (because they compare the figures limited to rice acreage up to the fourteenth century with figures of both rice and other grain acreages in 1589). As for technical advances, outstanding innovations were limited in the medieval period and a high net increase in overall rice production cannot actually be observed before the seventeenth century.[3] In contrast, historians and archaeologists have, since the 1980s, become aware of the high importance of millet and other dry cereals in agricultural history. The presence of these grains is indeed attested to since Neolithic times.

Polyculture of grains and vegetables

While our understanding of Japanese food production was widely marked by the idea of irrigated rice cultivation, the archaeological and historical data available to us from the 1980s onwards give a different picture and present a much wider range of agricultural produce. Polyculture predominated in Japan from the beginning of agriculture up to the modern period.

When irrigated rice cultivation reached northern Kyushu in the early first millennium BCE, dry rice and other graminae had already been known there for one or two millennia. Archaeologists have discovered traces of buckwheat (*soba*) and barnyard millet (*hie*) in Hokkaidō, dated from the early Neolithic (Jōmon, 4000–3000 BCE), as well as common millet (*kibi*), and foxtail millet (*awa*) in archaeological sites of northern Honshu from the mid-Neolithic (3000–2000 BCE). These cereals spread from the northeast to the southwest of the archipelago. Other plants have been present across the Japanese archipelago since the early Neolithic, such as beans (*ryokutō*) and tubers (taro [*satoimo*] and yams [*yamaimo*]). Dry rice cultivation was also practiced in western Honshu and Kyushu from the mid-Neolithic, long before irrigated rice agriculture had reached the Japanese Islands.[4]

Other edible plants are known from archaeological sites of the Yayoi period. In the 1980s, Terasawa Kaoru challenged the traditional view that irrigated rice cultivation was the only or even the main agricultural practice during the Yayoi period. He conducted archaeological research on the general plant situation in Japan after the introduction of irrigated rice growing, identifying 173 edible plant species in 224 archaeological sites dating from the Yayoi period, discovered in the form of seeds and pollens. Most plants were collected or gathered and thirty-seven plants, like millet and beans, were probably also cultivated. The fourteen most often-found plants (in order of frequency) were: acorns and beechnuts, rice, peaches, beans, gourd-calabash, walnuts, sweet chestnuts, barley and wheat, water-pepper, melons, horse chestnuts, vitaceae (grapes, etc.), camellia, and water chestnuts. These figures are, of course, biased by the conservation degree of plant remains. Thus the nut shells are better preserved in the soil than beans or the cereals. Yet it is reasonable to suppose that all these grains, nuts, vegetables, and fruits continued to play a crucial role in the diet throughout the prehistoric period.[5]

Archaeologists have long discussed prehistoric food acquisition systems. Miyamoto Kazuo, for example, contends that food acquisition has gone through the following stages:

- predomestic acquisition (systematic collecting and self-sowing); this implies familiarity with plants, but not changes to the plants themselves;
- domestication or management of plants (selection of and crystallizing species); in this case the plants change through human manipulation;
- agriculture (cropping and harvesting), begun with dry grains before the introduction of irrigated rice.[6]

Miyamoto dates the beginning of agriculture to the Middle or Late Neolithic but other archaeologists or ethnologists opt for the Final Neolithic. More recently (in 2014) Shitara Hiromi challenged these views and asserted that agriculture started only after the Neolithic, in the early Yayoi period.[7] There is thus a consensus among archaeologists on the principle of polyculture, but the dating of early agriculture still remains subject to debate.

Written sources on agricultural practices and food production become available from the Nara period (710–784). They provide a good picture of the production of grains, vegetables, fruits, and nuts. Provincial "Geographical Records" (*fudoki*), the documents of the Shōsōin (*Shōsōin monjo*), wooden strips with inscriptions (*mokkan*), all from the eighth century, as well as

the "Regulations of the Engi Era" (*Engishiki*, promulgated in 927 CE) give information on tax deliveries from the provinces to the Nara and Heian capitals. Every year the imperial court collected the tax cargoes of foods from sixty-eight provinces. Apart from official or administrative data, poets from the tenth to twelfth centuries mentioned their favorite natural products in *waka* verses. Together these sources describe a variety of edible plants. We can give some examples from about a total two hundred edible plants that are registered in the "Regulations of the Engi Era."[8]

These plants provide the full range of vegetable foods of medieval Japan. In fact, they remained the base of the Japanese diet well beyond the medieval period, as can be seen in the agricultural calendars of the Edo period. For example, the "Illustrated Agricultural Calendar" (*Nōgyō zue*) drafted by Tsuchiya Matasaburō (1642–1719), a manager of lands owned by the Maeda family in Kaga province (now Ishikawa prefecture), illustrates local practises in that region. The calendar shows that a variety of plants were cropped, mostly in spring or summer, and that, in contrast, wheat and barley followed an opposite pattern: they were cropped in autumn after the rice harvest, and were harvested in spring, when rice had only started to grow. This means that grain food was available even after the reserves of rice had run out in spring.[9]

The cultural primacy of rice: an invented tradition

The conventional theory of a Japanese "rice-growing civilization" (*inasaku bunka*) understands irrigated rice cultivation as the foundation of Japanese culture and as a distinctive feature of the Japanese society. Yet this assumption is based on what Eric Hobsbawm describes as an "Invented Tradition."[10] The Japanese image of the primacy of rice can be dated to the late nineteenth century. It appears, for instance, in a public announcement, published by the Japanese government after the enthronement of the Meiji Emperor in 1868, on the occasion of the first Thanksgiving Ritual (*Niinamesai*) of the new reign. The announcement says:

> In accordance with the will of the great goddess Amaterasu Ōmikami, rice, in our Empire, is a food that comes from a fine green plant. It was rice that the goddess had planted in her long and narrow heavenly rice fields; she gave it to the divine grandson when he descended to earth. We shall never forget this divine favor. Moreover, in order to ward off droughts and tempests, monarchs have continued, from generation to generation since Emperor Jinmu, to celebrate the offering of the new grain harvest to the heavenly and earthly gods, on the second day of the hare in the eleventh month. This has continued for three thousand years.[11]

This announcement features a link between rice, the goddess Amaterasu, and the imperial lineage. The event of the Thanksgiving Ritual inaugurated also the "restoration" of thirteen "ancient" rituals that celebrated the imperial lineage—eleven of which were in fact new creations by the Meiji government.[12]

Twentieth-century imperialism further boosted religious state rituals and mythology, with rice continuing its career as a national symbol. To the anthropologist Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962), rice played a decisive role in the origin and originality of the Japanese people. From the 1930s to the 1950s, he stated his conviction that the rituals and beliefs surrounding rice were associated with the presence of a rice spirit, and he drew attention to the predominance of rice in ritual, mythology, and diet. Yanagita's theories influenced subsequent generations until today.[13]

For example, the myth of the "Descent to earth of the divine grandson" in the "Chronicles of Japan" (*Nihon shokim* 720), according to all modern editions, tells of the "Heavenly Grandson,"

Hono-Ninigi, being entrusted by Amaterasu with heavenly "rice ears" and bringing them down to the Japanese archipelago. Yet, according to our reading, the original text does not, in fact, mention rice at all, but refers instead to the ears of all graminae. This is confirmed by another episode given in both the "Chronicle of Ancient Matters" (*Kojiki*, 712) and the *Nihon shoki* that narrates the beginning of agriculture with the "Birth of the five grains" from the body of the goddess Ōgetsuhime or Ukemochi. It names foxtail millet, silkworms, barnyard millet, wheat or barley, beans and rice; and comments, "The goddess Amaterasu collected these foods and ordered their cultivation: cereals and beans in dry fields (*hata*), rice in irrigated rice fields (*ta*)."[14]

Thus, in the early eighth century, *both* dry and irrigated cultivation were envisioned as parallel practices by the compilers of the imperial mythology. The same is true for the rituals associated with agriculture. We should be aware that the protocols of court ceremonies during the Heian period enlist rituals devoted not only to rice but to the "five grains." No ritual prayer (*norito*) mentions rice alone; all cite the "five grains" (*gokoku*). And the *Engi shiki* prescribes the annual Thanksgiving Ritual as an offering of both rice and foxtail millet (*awa*) in equal volume.[15]

Although the original primary sources point to polycultural practices, the prevailing understanding today still holds to the conventional view of a predominant role for rice in Japanese culture, mythology, and ritual. Yet Japanese historians and archaeologists have been distancing themselves from this idea since the late 1990s. To Senda Minoru, the mythology of the rice ears is a mere illusion created by modern interpretations, and to Tokoro Isao, the general view of ancient Japanese culture needs to be revised altogether.[16] Both authors have not received their due attention, although research in agricultural history has actually made important advances in their sense. Some milestones in this field should be mentioned.

Japanese agrarian historiography: a long and laborious path

The first generation of agronomist-historians scrutinized premodern sources and especially the materials from the Heian and Edo periods. Building on early work by Hōgetsu Keigo, Furushima Toshio published *The History of Agricultural Techniques* (1947) that is today still the standard reference for agrarian history in Japan. Marked by an evolutionistic approach, Furushima's work identifies significant technical progress and generalized increases in rice yields during the late medieval period.[17] In the closing decades of the twentieth century, Furushima's data were used and expanded by Kimura Shigemitsu and Kuroda Hideo, and both scholars much modified and toned down the image of increased yields and the dominance of rice. They sensitized academic circles to dry cereal cultivation after Amino Yoshihiko had drawn attention to the existence of dry fields alongside rice fields on the medieval estates. Subsequently, in 1981, the archaeologist Terasawa Kaoru published his discoveries of the remains of dry fields and dry grains in the Japanese sites of the Yayoi period.[18]

After this initial stage, marked by a growing awareness of the existence of dry cereals, Amino Yoshihiko began to conduct a veritable offensive. In 1980, Amino criticized in very explicit terms the "rizicentric" view (*suiden chūshin shikan*) then current among scholars. In his view, rice predominated in tax levies but not in the diet of the general population. In the countryside, argued Amino, rice appeared only on festive tables. He continued to criticize what he called the "rizicentric theories" (*inasaku ichigenron*) well into the 1990s, his views giving impetus to numerous debates.[19]

Two conferences specifically re-examined the conventional image of agricultural practices in history, both bringing together historians, anthropologists, and archaeologists. The first, organized in 1988 by the anthropologist Sasaki Kōmei, featured evidence of dry grain cropping in both archaeologic and ethnographic research. The second conference, organized by Tanigawa Kenichi

and other anthropologists in 1993, was meant to "revise the image of Japanese culture itself" (*Nihon zō o toinaosu*). Nevertheless, in this conference, Ōbayashi Taryō, while on one hand deploring the biased rizicentric arguments and also raising the issue of the shortage of rice in food throughout history, did, on the other hand, focus on the predominance of rice in the religious rituals and implicitly in Japanese culture. Although from the 1990s, the diversity of crops has become widely acknowledged by scholars, the place of rice in Japanese culture still remains a subject to debate. A four-year research project published in 2014 by the National Museum of Japanese History advanced the idea of a "composite Japanese culture" (*Nihon bunka no tagensei*) with multiple practices of food acquisition.[20] This perception might receive more support from now. As an example we turn now to the archeo-botanical and anthropological points of view on some other agricultural practices that promise to enhance additional interdisciplinary research in the future.

A mountainous environment and biodiversity

Two other aspects of food production have not, to this day, received much consideration in historical research: shifting cultivation and plant gathering. The latter, although a major topic in archaeological research on the early hunter-gatherer societies, has hardly received any treatment in historical studies on classical and medieval Japan. The same is true for shifting cultivation, which has been ignored in the history of the classical and medieval periods. In contrast, both shifting cultivation and gathering practices are discussed in anthropological and historical studies on Edo Japan.

The two acquisition techniques are closely linked to the geographical environment. Today, about 70 percent of the Japanese archipelago is covered by mountains and its forest coverage is among the highest in the world (third, after Finland). Before the colonization of Hokkaido, in the Meiji period, and prior to modern reclamation campaigns, mountains with steep slopes covered more than 75 percent of the country, while plains and the plateaux represented only a tiny part of the country's total area. With such a topography, most of the Japanese landscape was thus an unfavourable environment for irrigated rice cultivation, as even the gentlest slope requires terracing.

In fact, the mountainous areas were always a privileged milieu of biodiversity. Japan registers 4,000 plant species today. From the Neolithic period, wooded mountains offered an abundance of plants available for collecting and gathering across the archipelago. In autumn, nuts were plentiful in the various environments. The northeastern Beech/Fagus zone of deciduous forests presented acorns of nara oaks, beechnuts, walnuts, horse chestnuts, and sweet chestnuts. The southwestern laurel-forest zone of evergreen forests provided acorns of kashi and shii oaks, kaya (seeds of the torreya fruit, or Japanese yew seeds), and other fruits such as the persimmon kaki and the akebia. Spring offered gatherers plants, such as brackens and angelica, with edible parts. Mountain inhabitants extracted nutritious starches from the roots of lilies, yams, pueraria, and bracken. Nuts and acorns have a caloric value similar to that of cultivated cereals; and some—like walnuts, torreya seeds, and pinenuts—provide up to twice as many calories. The mountains, in other words, provided many opportunities for obtaining plant foods.[21]

Gathering wild plants

Life in the mountain areas has been studied by anthropologists, who have analyzed local documents from mountain villages. Two reports from the nineteenth century might serve as reference for medieval practices. Matsuyama Toshio examined the Hida monograph, *Hida gofudoki*,

completed in 1873, at the request of the mayor of Takayama. The old province of Hida corresponds to the mountainous region around present-day Takayama city in Gifu prefecture, situated at 1,000 meters in altitude. This monograph describes in detail the agricultural and artisanal products of 415 villages that had a population of 92,600 people. According to Matsuyama's calorimetric estimates, the villagers of this area lived 46 percent from their own grain farming and purchased another 15 percent of grain foods from neighboring counties. But they also gained as much as 39 percent of their nutritional needs from gathering. One can notice the high significance of the biodiversity of plants in the villagers' lives.

A similar proportion can be seen in another report, the private diary of one Yamashita Tadajirō, who lived in Shiramine on Mount Hakusan, Ishikawa prefecture, in the 1850s. According to Chiba Tokuji, the Yamashita family lived on swidden-field crops and commercial products, such as silkworm rearing, cryptomeria (*sugi*) wood, and charcoal. They lived on chestnuts for two to three months every year. In the various seasons, they also collected two types of bracken, royal fern, angelica *udo*, butterbur, thistles (*azami*), yams, lilies (*yuri*), pueraria roots, a vitaceae (*yamabudō*), akebia, lotus, foxnuts (*onibasu*), and potatoes. These reports are but two examples of the Edo period local monographs that came down to us in great numbers, but they represent the lives of hundreds of villages situated in the mountain chains that stretch from the northeast to the southwest of the Japanese archipelago, and provide knowledge on the practices of food production of early modern Japan.[22] As the topographical environment was unchanged through the centuries, these documents should be considered as valuable references for premodern Japanese practices of food acquisition. Local monographs from the Edo period also show that the plant gathering and swidden farming were joint practices of food acquisition in the mountainous milieu.

Swidden farming

Shifting cultivation—and especially swidden or slash-and-burn farming—is an agricultural system in which plots of land are cultivated temporarily. It has long been one of the most widespread forms of agriculture. Slash-and-burn farming consists of cutting down a patch of forest, burning the wood, and sowing the ground for one or more years before abandoning it once more to the forest. This system continued in Europe up to the nineteenth century and it is still practiced today in tropical and subtropical countries of South America, Central Africa, and Southeast Asia. According to the FAO, the world population of swidden farmers was two hundred million in 1950, and the area of swidden fields 36 million square kilometers.[23]

In Japan, swidden farming was practiced into the twentieth century. The anthropologist Sasaki Kōmei carried out systematic field research in the 1950s. As he describes it, trees were felled in July or early August on a plot of land on a mountain slope that was intended for growing buckwheat as the first crop. Sowing and planting were carried out among the ashes. Cropping continued for four years. After cropping, the field was abandoned for a reforestation period of twenty to thirty years. In the hamlet of Kajiwara at Itsuki-mura, situated in the mountains of Kumamoto in Kyushu, for instance, the farmers did not grow any rice. They lived a self-sufficient existence from swidden farming, gathering, and a few permanent crops of millet. Ethnographic field research in other Asian countries shows that many mountain villages in Southeast Asia live until today by plant gathering and swidden farming. For example, Laos traditionally shared with Japan the botanic laurel-forest zone of evergreen forests and, like Japan, more than two-thirds of the country is covered by steep mountains featuring a high biodiversity. Hundreds of villages in Laos still live by swidden cultivation, gathering of wild plants, and small orchards today.[24]

In premodern Japan, swidden cultivation had a thoroughly private character, and was ignored by the public registers. It therefore is very poorly documented in written sources. We nevertheless

have been able to find evidence of this practice throughout Japanese history by analyzing the early eighth-century place names of small village units (*sato*) in the eighth-century documents of the Shōsōin, the names of Shinto shrines in the *Engishiki* (927), dictionaries and poetry of the tenth and twelfth centuries, medieval estate documents, agricultural treatises of the eighteenth century, and local reports of the nineteenth century. William Wayne Farris has also discovered references to the slash-and-burn tradition in the Japanese mythology as well as in early poetry.[25]

All these data attest to the existence of swidden cultivation in Japan throughout the centuries but they do not provide figures on the scale and volume of the swidden crops, nor on their share in food production of premodern Japan. Far from being a marginal practice, however, slash-and-burn farming represents the very first and most basic form of agriculture. In his review of agricultural history, Andō Hiromichi, states that the idea of swidden farming (*yakihata*) as the earliest form of agriculture was adopted by scholars in the 1970s, and that since the 1990s this concept gave an impetus to a wider perception of the Japanese traditions altogether. Andō defends the concept of a "Composite Japanese culture" with multiple farming practices combining "non-rice farming" (*hi-inasaku nōkō*) and a "swidden cropping culture" (*yakihata bunka*), as well as a "irrigated rice growing culture" (*inasaku bunka*).[26] We now understand that various forms of food production have been practiced throughout history along with irrigated rice. These forms eventually marked the Japanese diet.

Food production and diet

Each type of food acquisition presents its own specific features: Irrigated rice has high yields and produces many calories on a small acreage. Rice can grow without manure, because water contributes potassium, calcium, and magnesium to the soil. Yet rice needs intensive care for leveling or terracing, as well as the maintenance of hydraulic systems. And rice was heavily taxed. In the premodern periods, farmers or proprietors retained less than half their rice harvests, after taxes and other deductions. And with its need for multiple rounds of weeding, irrigated rice is the most labor-intensive form of agriculture.

Permanent dry grain fields have low yields—about one-fifth those of rice yields. They need much added fertilization. Green manure, or composting, remained the principal method before the introduction of commercial fertilizers consisting of vegetable oil or dried fish meal in the seventeenth century. Green manure requires wasteland nearby, and demands about two months' work each year cutting grass to fertilize one hectare of land. Without fertilization, harvests decrease by half or more from the second year. Permanent fields therefore needed intensive care. But in contrast to irrigated rice, most dry crops were not taxed by the government until the seventeenth century, and thus the harvests fully belonged to the farmer or the proprietor.

Swidden farming needs no soil fertilization, thanks to the ashes that remain on the field after burning. The soil minerals are also replenished by including a bean crop within the four-year crop rotation. The yields of swidden fields are the same as those of permanent dry fields, but they are sometimes easier to manage. Today the high demography in some countries leads to the failure to allow sufficiently long recycling periods for the forests and results in significant forest destruction. But this was not the case of medieval Japan, where shifting cultivation was a sustainable resource in food production. It was not subdued to taxes and, combined with plant gathering, could feed the farmers' families.

Gathering or harvesting of wild edible plants was widely practiced through the entire realm and in all times. Green plants and fruits provide vitamins, tubers starch, beans proteins, and nuts and seeds provide oil and high calories. Thanks to their high biodiversity the mountain areas of Japan offered plentiful plant foods.

I have been engaged, in recent years, in efforts to learn how much rice the Japanese ate during the premodern period. I have analysed household registers and other administrative documents from the eighth century, and compared the production of the individual farmers' rice plots with the one of public holdings or temple estates. I have also calculated the figures of yields, production, taxes, deduction of seeds, and have measured daily caloric needs of rice, using the records of the daily rations of craftsmen and subordinate workers at the Nara court. And I have further calculated the actual rice earnings of farmers in terms of volume and calories.

From this, it is clear that there are significant variations, on the one hand, between different households, due to their situations (number of people, areas worked, soil quality); and on the other hand, within the same household, depending on the years (climate, natural disasters). In terms of calories, balancing the consumption patterns between well-off households (with 43 percent of needs supplied by rice) and poor households (with 10 percent of needs supplied) yields an average of 26 percent. It therefore seems reasonable to say that in the eighth century, rice provided, as a general average, one-quarter of the caloric needs of the Japanese population of commoners.[27] In other words, rice was not the main staple food of the Japanese population in the eighth century and probably never was, at any time during the medieval period. More research is, however, needed to know what then was their staple food and what the diets of the medieval Japanese *did* consist of.

We lack detailed information about the nutrition of the population of commoners in the premodern period, although a variety of records on food, dating from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, have survived. For the Edo period, historians distinguish between the elite of the ruling warrior and merchant classes, on one hand, and the tenant farmers that made up the core of the Japanese population, on the other. Postwar historians from the 1950s promoted an image of a peasantry that was fairly poor and rarely tasted steamed rice, while better-off social groups ate up to one *koku* (180 litres) of rice a year, which accounted for between half and 60 percent of their diet.

But more recently, historians have begun to consider the difference between diets of the various social classes to have been narrower than once thought. According to Arizono Shōichirō's calculations published in 1997, the population of tenant farmers of the seventeenth to eighteenth century must have eaten between 0.34 *koku* and 0.5 *koku* of rice per year per person, which would account for one-quarter of their needs, this figure being similar to the one I calculated for the eighth century. For élites—the privileged classes of well-off farmers, high- and middle-ranking warriors and merchants—consumption amounted, according to Arizono, to 50 or 60 percent of the food, the rest being made up by barley, barnyard millet, foxtail millet, buckwheat, and soybeans. For the nineteenth century, which followed important technological improvements and a rise in agricultural output, Arizono quotes figures at the national level from the "Farming Statistics" (*Nōji tōkei hyō*) of 1861, and from it infers the following proportions for the average daily nutrition: rice 47 percent, wheat and barley 28 percent, other cereals and starches 25 percent. To Arizono, rice therefore supplied, by the late nineteenth century, half the dietary needs, even for the majority of the population that did not belong to the privileged classes.[28]

From the data of the eighth century and the Edo period we can infer that throughout the medieval period rice covered about one-quarter of the nutritional needs for the rural population of Japan, and that a large part of their nutritional needs was covered by other grains and by wild plant foods. In other words, food was very diverse but it was never abundant throughout Japanese history. We know indeed of innumerable cases of famines and natural disasters.[29] As in many other countries, food security was the very first concern, and the primary occupation, of Japanese daily life. Bowls of freshly steamed white rice probably very rarely appeared on the menus of commoners in classical and medieval Japan. Instead their diets were made up by mixtures of grains, leaves, roots, as well as a variety of nuts, seeds, and other wild plants.

Conclusion: a diversity of agricultural practices and food production

Throughout Japanese history, rice production was the first concern of public administrations. Rice therefore has the largest presence in written sources from all periods. But as the foregoing discussion indicates, we also understand that rice was not the main staple food for most of the population in the medieval period, before an increase in production in the Edo period. Until then, only a small part of the harvests remained with the households of the rice farmers themselves, whereas the bulk of the production was absorbed by fiscal levies meant to feed the élites. In contrast, dry grains, beans, and tubers that were cropped either in permanent or in swidden fields did remain with the farmers' households for their nutrition. Gathering was another important food resource. In some cases, gathering nuts, seeds, kernels, acorns, and green wild plants provided an important proportion of the diets in upland areas. With an overwhelming majority of mountainous areas, and their rich biodiversity, foods have been available through various polycultural and gathering activities.

These means of food acquisition produced the calories, proteins, vitamins, and starches for the subsistence of the population of classical and medieval Japan. In other words, rice did not occupy a more important space in the lives of the Japanese than other plant foods. We can say that the long-standing argument of a rice-centered society is not valid anymore. In this chapter I have introduced both previous and recent research on agricultural techniques encompassing irrigated rice and showing multiple farming practices. Yet this is only the beginning of a change in our overall appraisal of Japanese traditions. Interdisciplinary research in archaeology, history, anthropology, and ethnography is still needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the agriculture and food production of premodern Japan.

Notes

1 Charlotte von Verschuer, *Rice, Agriculture and the Food Supply in Premodern Japan: The Place of Rice*; Hirose Kazuo, *Jōmon kara Yayoi e no shin rekishi zō*; Negita Yoshio, "Inasaku no hajimari"; Tamada Yoshihide, *Rettō bunka no hajimari*; Fujio Shinichirō, *Shin Yayoi jidai, gohyakunen hayakatta suiden inasaku*. From 2009 to 2011, the National Museum of Japanese History devoted a research program to the "Formation and Development of Agrarian Society: Reconstruction of the Image of the Yayoi Period" and published the results in 2014. In this volume, Shitara Hiromi, "Nōkō bunka fukugō to Yayoi bunka" assesses (p. 465) the passage from the Neolithic (Jōmon) period to the Yayoi period at the beginning of agricultural cropping practices (well before the introduction of irrigated rice cultivation); Shitara does not give dates, because of large regional differences between the northeast and the southwest of the archipelago.

2 Verschuer, *Rice*, ch. 1; see William Wayne Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land in Early Japan, 645–900*. For eighth-century agriculture, see also Gina Barnes' general outline, "Japan's Natural Setting."

3 For Kuroda Hideo, *Nihon chūsei kaihatsushi no kenkyū*, 70–73, the main medieval innovation was the introduction of the *taitōmai* variety of irrigated rice. See Kimura Shigemitsu, *Hatake to Nihonjin*, 110–115; Harada Nobuo, *Chūsei no mura no katachi to karashi*, 21–25; and also Verschuer, *Rice*.

4 Miyamoto Kazuo, "Jōmon nōkō to Jōmon shakai," 118–121; another list of graminae and other plants from the Neolithic appears in Sasaki Kōmei, *Nihon bunka no kiso o saguru*, 223.

5 Terasawa Kaoru, "Inasaku gijutsu to Yayoi no nōkō," 291–350, esp. 336–350; Verschuer, *Rice*, 195–230.

6 Miyamoto, "Jōmon nōkō to Jōmon shakai," 115–138.

7 Shitara Hiromi maintains that the number and volume of the plant remains in Neolithic sites are too limited (sometimes only four or five grains in a site) to draw conclusions on any agricultural activity. See Shitara, "Nōkō bunka fukugō to Yayoi bunka," 460.

8 Verschuer, *Rice*, 301–315, presents a list of two hundred plants from the *Engishiki*.

9 *Nōgyō zue*, 1717, Tsuchiya Matasaburō (1642–1719), *Nihon nōsho zenshū*, vol. 26, pp. 137, 138, 260, 261 (sowing wheat and barley in the eighth and ninth months and harvesting them in the fifth month). See the table "Agricultural Calendar (Kaga Region in 1717)" in Verschuer, *Rice*, 318.

10 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*. Hobsbawm describes how, at the end of the nineteenth century, in the wake of rising nationalism, European countries adopted national songs and flags, as well as so-called old traditions that were meant to foster national pride.
11 Japanese text in Murakami Shigeyoshi, *Tennō no saishi*, 68, 69.
12 Murakami, *Tennō no saishi*, 75–106. For subsequent propaganda about rice, one may consult *Kokutai shikan* (1929), *Kokutai no hongi kaisetsu taisei* (1940) and *Kokutai no hongi to nōdō* (1942). For details, see Verschuer, *Rice*, 278–280.
13 Yanagita's interpretations are cited in books such as Wakamori Tarō, *Yanagita Kunio to rekishigaku*, 201–205, as well as in dictionaries and in general publications on rice in Japanese history "ine no Nihonshi."
14 *Nihon shoki*, book 2 'Jindai ge' 9th dan, second version, 152, 153, in *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei*, vol. 67. This edition, and all other editions, give the modern reading "rice ears" (*inaho*) while reproducing the original text in kanji that says only "grain ears" (*ho*). See the "five grains" (*gokoku*) in *Nihon shoki*, book 1 'Jindai jō' 5th dan, 89; and *Kojiki*, book I ("Gokoku no kigen"), *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei*, vol. 1, 85.
15 A discussion on rituals, court ceremonies, and prayers appears in Verschuer, *Rice*, 263–296. See the *norito* prayers in *Engishiki*, book 8, 159–177, and the Thanksgiving ritual in *Engishiki*, book 31, 749, and book 35, 800, in the *Shintei zōhō Kokushi taikei* edition.
16 Senda Minoru, "Takachiho no gensō"; Tokoro Isao, *Nihon rekishi saikō*. See also Hirose, *Jōmon kara Yayoi e no shin rekishi zō*; and Tamada, *Rettō bunka no hajimari*. In 2014, Andō Hiromichi, "Suiden chūshin shikan hihan no kōzai," 405–448, traced the background and history of the rice-centered views from the perspective of Yayoi archaeology and called for a change in the conventional opinion, which has been biased by the primacy of rice for too long.
17 Hōgetsu and Furushima, quoted by Takagi Tokurō, "Chūsei wa seisan-ryoku ga kōjō shita jidai dewa nakatta no desu ka," 30–33. Educational textbooks such as *Shōsetsu Nihonshi zuroku*, 122, mention draught tillage, intensive fertilization, and double-cropping as arguments for the medieval advances in rice production. Takagi gives a summary of these arguments and deplores the lack, as of 2012, of proper agronomic analyses of farming techniques.
18 See Kimura Shigemitsu, "Chūsei seiritsuki ni okeru hatasaku no seikaku to ryōyū kankei"; and *Nihon kodai chūsei hatasakushi no kenkyū*; Kuroda, *Nihon chūsei kaihatsushi no kenkyū*; Amino Yoshihiko, "Shōen kōryōsei no keisei to kōzō"; Terasawa Kaoru and Terasawa Tomoko, "Yayoi jidai shokubutsu-shitsu shokuryō no kisoteki kenkyū."
19 Amino Yoshihiko, *Nihon chūsei no minshū zō*; and "Inasaku ichigenron no kuppuku."
20 Sasaki Kōmei and Matsuyama Toshio, *Hatasaku bunka no tanjō*; Tanigawa Ken'ichi et al., *Nihon zō o toinaosu* (especially the interpretations on the rituals of rice, 96–118); Shitara Hiromi, "Nōkō bunka fukugō to Yayoi bunka."
21 See Gina Barnes, "Japan's Natural Setting," 5, for variations in reading the topographic statistics according to sources and definitions of mountain areas. Makino Tomitarō, *Shin Nihon shokubutsu zukan*, lists 3,996 plant species of Japan. A table of "Calorific Values of Foods" appears in Verschuer, *Rice*, 320.
22 Matsuyama Toshio, "Hida sanson no shokuryō shigen," 176–196; Chiba Tokuji, "Yamashita Tadajirō ke shozatsujiki ni tsuite," 9–20. These reports are reinterpreted in respect to tax duties, by Verschuer, *Rice*, 221–224.
23 On shifting cultivation in Europe, see François Sigaut, *L'agriculture et le feu*, and Axel Steensberg, *Fire-Clearance Husbandry: Traditional Techniques Throughout the World*. The figures are quoted from FAO, "Shifting Cultivation," 159–164.
24 Sasaki Kōmei, *Inasaku izen*, 88–136. See also an ethnographic survey done in Vietnam in 1949 by Georges Condominas, *We Have Eaten the Forest* (first published in French in 1983). In Laos, in 2010, each family in the Koknang village of Luang Prabang province, at 1100 meters in altitude, cultivated both one hectare of irrigated rice and a swidden field with cotton, sesame, and dry rice. See Harada Nobuo, "Raos hokubu sonraku no keikan to nōmin," 251–253. I visited about ten villages in the Luang Prabang province in Laos, in February 2014, all situated at high altitudes, and noticed that most of the families lived by one swidden plot, a small orchard, pig and poultry farming, as well as gathering of plants, hunting, and fishing (no permanent crop). Yet as Totman, *The Green Archipelago: Forestry in Preindustrial Japan*, 17–18, 22, notes, the botanic environment of Japan underwent thorough changes through history and there is not much left of the southwestern laurel-forest cover today; the same is true for Laos.
25 Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land in Early Japan, 645–900*, 109–112.
26 Andō, "Suiden chūshin shikan hihan no kōzai," 410–411. International ethnography and archaeology in Europe and China have since long regarded swidden cultivation as the earliest form of agriculture; see

Jean Guilaine, *Les premiers paysans du monde, naissance des agricultures*. Francesca Bray, "Agriculture," 98–101, assumes that swidden farming preceded permanent agriculture in China during the Zhou period, between 1134 and 250 BCE, but unevenly depending on the regions and epochs.

27 Verschuer, *Rice*, 238–248.

28 Arizono Shōichirō, *Zairai nōkō no chiiki kenkyū*, 154–174.

29 See the chapter by Farris in this volume.

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25
Commerce and towns in medieval Japan

Suzanne Gay

The term "medieval" evokes an image of political diffuseness in which powerful warriors established local rule as the central state of classical times gradually faded into obscurity. While this describes medieval Japanese political history with some accuracy, it overlooks an important parallel reality: a vital market economy with regional and local centers of trade, well-established commercial networks that functioned dependably despite political instability, and a rising level of urbanization with communities of various types and sizes emerging throughout the country.

From the late twentieth century, two important trends in Japanese historiography have helped illuminate medieval Japan's thriving commercial and urban sectors: the elevation of local history to the status of respected subfield and the inclusion of archeological evidence in historical analysis. Another trend worthy of brief discussion is increased attention to the role natural disasters play in shaping the course of human history. These scholarly developments have transformed our understanding of medieval commerce and towns, supplying quantitative depth, effecting a qualitative shift in our understanding of medieval society, and making explicit the connection between commerce and the urban. Beside the diffuse "medieval" of political history was a robust commercial "medieval" of well-functioning consistency in which products circulated through towns and cities and in which all social groups played vital roles.

Although the medieval period extended over about four centuries, for commerce, its core was what William Wayne Farris has called the medieval "best of times," defined by him as extending from about 1280 to 1450.[1] This interval of relative stability allowed a commercial revolution to occur upon an infrastructure established over earlier centuries: namely, the estate system of private landholding and the continuing, older system of state-held lands, both necessitating transport of goods to the capital. To this end, land and sea routes were plied, along which communities provided exchange systems, supplies, and services. By the latter half of the thirteenth century these routes were expanding as local and regional merchants traded in goods, not only beating a path to the capital but carving out intra-regional trade zones as well. Meanwhile, technological advances allowed for greater agricultural output, generating a surplus and a rise in population.

Improvements in transportation technology facilitated trade, as did monetization. Thus by the fifteenth century, the largely subsistence economy of earlier times had been replaced in most areas by one that was market-driven and commodity-based. Merchants, transporters, and craftsmen

organized into protected local guilds were the most prominent players in medieval commerce while cultivators at the supply end and warrior lords at the domain level were likewise full participants in the operation of commerce.

As for towns and cities, until the late twentieth century the characterization of medieval Japan's urban sector resembled a pyramid, with Kyoto at the top as the imperial capital, Japan's largest city by far, home to aristocratic and religious consumers of products shipped in from their provincial estates. Mercantile and craft guilds proliferated there under the taxing authority of mainly religious overlords. Outside of Kyoto, smaller cities of varying types emerged, including port and post towns, temple-affiliated towns, country towns that evolved from rural markets, and early castle towns. At the base of the pyramid were villages, tiny communities where the majority agrarian population lived in what was assumed to be a largely subsistence economy.

Working against a more complex representation of the urban was historians' tendency to focus heavily on matters of governance and the nature of rulership. This can be seen in the postwar search for the self-governing Japanese medieval city, in accordance with the contemporary understanding of European medieval cities. Although this search gave way in the 1970s to fuller attention to cities as communities, including neighborhood life, cultural activities, and commercial guilds, a dependence on textual sources, necessarily elite in origin, still meant that administrative policy, taxation, and conflicts between rulers and residents got the lion's share of historians' notice.[2] Attention to rulership also determined Kuroda Toshio's characterization of medieval cities as primarily political and religious bases of the ruling elites, and thus, according to him, necessarily large and only numbering three in total—Kyoto, Nara, and Kamakura.[3] Amino Yoshihiko later broadened the category considerably with his concept of "city-like places" (*toshiteki na ba*), allowing numerous communities of varying sizes to be considered cities.[4] Still, little attention was paid to them as nodes in larger commercial networks and trade routes. The specifics of commerce and trade, including transportation systems and the specialists who ran them, remained mostly untouched until later decades when archeological evidence amassed sufficiently to give both depth and breadth to our understanding of trade.

From the late twentieth century, as urban and commercial scholarship flourished in Japan, several works appeared in English as well that explicated aspects of medieval commerce and economy. Kozo Yamamura's 1990 account of the medieval economic revolution through commercial activities and institutions like markets and guilds, widespread commutation and monetization, was for its time notable for not making commercial matters primarily about the rulers' policies.[5] William Wayne Farris's economic and social history provided the important medieval context in which commerce and cities could thrive, and departs from other treatments by showing how economic developments affected and were effected by various social groups.[6] My 2009 study of a group of lamp oil merchants revealed a commercial network dealing in a specific commodity that covered most of western Japan, utilizing trade routes originally for the transport of estate goods in the Heian period.[7] Ethan Segal's study of economic growth in the early medieval period depicts Japan's shift to a market economy as happening mainly far from the center.[8] Rural markets were a prime locus for monetization, while commutation and bills of exchange enabled long-range transactions. Most recently, Peter Shapinsky's study of Inland Sea "maritime magnates" supplies for the first time in English an account of the workings of medieval maritime commerce and trade routes while defining piracy in terms of local rulership.[9] It is notable that a primary focus on Kyoto characterizes none of these studies, although its centrality is recognized where relevant. The capital did not eclipse myriad other towns, cities, and commercial activities.

This more sophisticated understanding of commerce, monetization, and trade routes requires shelving the earlier pyramid model of medieval cities, with Kyoto at its apex. To insist on the

primacy of an enduring capital city amid medieval decentralization is to think in a modern way, emphasizing order and control, functioning judicial organs, and authorities capable of forming and executing policy. Capital-centric thinking, moreover, implies not only a solid center but defined, defendable outer boundaries—a nation-state, in effect. If, on the other hand, we unlock our gaze on Kyoto we can begin to "think medievally," acknowledging the significance of the local with peculiar residential patterns, specific trade arrangements, and varying levels of elite control. Then the importance of cities like Hakata as a base for international trade comes into sharper focus, as do areas previously considered remote and peripheral, like the Sea of Japan coastline, dotted with small but numerous communities that sustained trade with northern regions and Korea. Instead of a pyramid, then, a more accurate image of medieval commerce may be a series of wheels, with Kyoto at the hub of the largest one and many towns on its rim; beyond that were small but vigorous communities linked through trade across varying terrains and seas. This is the more complicated picture of commerce and towns in medieval Japan.

Discovering the local, embracing archeology

Until the 1970s, local history (*chihōshi*) was not on the professional medieval historian's agenda in Japan.[10] Those involved in local history either were regarded as hobbyists lacking proper research tools or were recognized as local teachers or municipal officials with a professional need to know their own areas in specific, limited ways. On the other hand, even if not regarded as local history, detailed studies of individual estates were integral to the professional historian's study of peasants and local samurai. If anything, the study of medieval history was over-localized: many medieval historians were more focused on specific estates than on articulating a picture of the whole.

This began to change with the rise of social history in the 1970s, and in the 1980s a new scholarly interest in regional and local markets required examining estates and local communities in a larger context. The systematic excavation and cataloguing of historic sites by archeologists, meanwhile, occurred as required at sites like Kyoto's train station and in other areas where public works like dams and airports were to inundate or damage historically significant sites. The published results of such archeological digs came to the attention of historians, and interdisciplinary research activities were held, like workshops and site surveys whose participants included professional and local historians, archeologists, and geographers.

Professional historians' newly found appreciation of local scholars derived partly from the latter's knowledge demonstrated in such joint activities. Site investigations with participants from multiple disciplines have yielded new methodologies. For example, old maps and pre-war photographs are now studied for their possible reflection, even centuries after the fact, of medieval conditions and topography. Even oral history has its place: local elders are interviewed for their memories of past practices in water use and folk customs as possibly medieval in origin. Participants in these interdisciplinary investigations create large maps and then inscribe them with detailed local information.

Dubious as these methodologies would have been considered a few years ago, their comprehensiveness has great power to suggest new understandings of locales. Moreover, as post-bubble government stimulus projects increased in the 1990s and beyond, local historians led the way in opposing some construction projects outright for threatened obliteration of historical sites. At least one case, in Nanao on the Noto peninsula, saw historical concerns joined with environmental: a highway set to cut through this castle town was opposed in 2001 for threatening not only to obliterate historical sites but to damage the vista as well.[11] The term "regional history" (*chiikishi*) has replaced "local history" (*chihōshi*) in the professional historian's lexicon, removing the dichotomy between central and local implied in the latter term and instead, with *chiikishi*'s implication of broader significance, allowing a nod of respect toward local studies.

Amid this relaxing of methodological standards and acceptance of other disciplines and local knowledge, how has our understanding of medieval commerce and towns changed? Recent advances in the field of archeology in particular have illuminated the extensiveness of urbanization in areas previously passed over by most historians, such as the coastline of the Sea of Japan. Discovery of the same ceramics and coins in disparate locales can be evidence of towns, trade routes, and markets. Scholarly attention to medieval roadways and their connection to commerce, discussed below, have also benefited from archeological excavations that demonstrate the existence of communities as connecting points for medieval communications and trade routes.

Studies resulting from the interdisciplinary site investigations described above have revealed a greater range of medieval commerce than was earlier understood, not only among Japanese inhabitants but with others as well, including Emishi regions, the Ryukyus, and Korea. Thus our knowledge today of medieval commerce and urbanization is quantifiably greater than before; equally important is our new understanding of the reach of commerce: medieval Japanese society, at least on Honshu and Kyushu, was both more urban and more tied into commercial networks and trade routes than previously thought.

One example of this expansion of knowledge through interdisciplinary research is a new attention to medieval roadways and their connection to commerce.[12] Studies incorporating archeological evidence show that major roads not only transported goods from estates to overlords in the capital, but were also traveled by craftsmen and merchants bearing commodities and offering services. This confirms in concrete terms the commercial revolution of the thirteenth century. Roads generally had an urbanizing function, moreover, with communities forming along them as communication nodes. Thus in medieval times, in addition to the city types outlined in earlier scholarship, other "city-like places" with urban functions, yet often quite small, grew up as connecting points in areas where land- or sea-based trade flowed, including markets, harbors, moorings, berths, river crossings, and billeting quarters.

Archeological digs reveal that medieval communities came into being at the intersections of roads, such as those emanating out of Kamakura and crossing the Kanto Plain. An excavation at one site, Arainekota in Fukushima prefecture, revealed between a set of parallel ditches evidence of a major road to the north possibly taken by Minamoto Yoritomo when he headed to Hiraizumi in pursuit of Yoshitsune in 1189.[13] It was hypothesized at the time of the excavation that a settlement had also existed on that spot, a common sense assumption perhaps, but without supporting evidence. Subsequent digs found fortifications and a billeting quarter, a river with evidence of a bridge, along with shards of dishes and cooking pots proving habitation, and unfinished wooden boxes showing the presence of craftsmen. Another example is the excavated port town of Nojiokada in Kusatsu City, Shiga prefecture, where Minamoto Yoritomo stayed while on a campaign, located at a strategic transit point connecting several roadways to Lake Biwa.[14]

Kamakura is a prime example of a medieval city more richly appreciated now than a generation ago thanks to extensive archeological excavations.[15] Starting with several temple compounds in 1975, archeological digs have extended into streets and residential areas, the vicinity of the train station, and the city's original main street, Wakamiya Ōji. The layout of the warrior capital, the evidence of medieval civil engineering projects including roads and harbor development, and medieval objects of everyday use have all been unearthed, significantly enhancing our grasp of the city's history, including commerce.[16]

Kamakura's origins as a warrior capital city date to the tenth month of 1180 when Minamoto Yoritomo established his base there. Warrior patronage of Zen also made it an important religious center; the medieval city drew popular proselytizers like Ippen as well. Especially from 1232 as the 51-article legal code of the Kamakura shogunate, the *Goseibai shikimoku*, was implemented, the city grew apace as an administrative center under the Hōjō regents. Commerce in

Kamakura emerged from about the same time. Excavations have revealed that improvements to the city's long, shallow beach supported by the regent Yasutoki included the construction of two small artificial islands and stone bulkheads still visible today; this created a safe, convenient harbor for trading ships as evidenced by the Chinese ceramics found among the city's excavated objects. As a result of the abundance of the latter, it is now thought that the 1254 shogunal order prohibiting more than five Chinese ships in harbor was intended to limit unofficial trade in Kamakura, not Hakata, as previously assumed. The 1254 ruling may also be taken as a converse indication of thriving trade—namely, that more than five Chinese ships could be found berthed in Kamakura's harbor. The city's population growth can be seen further in the 1265 shogunal decree both prohibiting the incursion of houses onto public streets and permitting the establishment of seven new neighborhoods for townspeople that would become the city's commercial center. Also much studied by archeologists are Kamakura's dramatic "cut-throughs" (*kiritōshi*), roads built through the rocky hills around the city during Yasutoki's rule and thereafter. Some linked the city with the outside world while others integrated areas of the city previously isolated by hills, thus creating a cohesive metropolis. While serving a military purpose, the roads out of the city also allowed participation in land-based regional trade, previously limited to small coastal roads.[17]

During the fourteenth century military upheaval, Kamakura suffered some damage but, despite the demise of its own shogunate, revived soon after when the new Kyoto-based Muromachi shogunate established a deputyship in Kamakura to keep an eye on eastern-country warriors. Commerce and Zen continued to thrive as well. Archeology has helped bring the commercial sector of medieval Kamakura to life; we can now appreciate the city as one of Japan's major regional trade nodes, including even trade with China.

Amid this scholarly recognition of the local and incorporation of archeological evidence, to understand the reach of medieval commerce we must also consider one more factor: networks of merchants who transcended single locales. Some of these were individually itinerating and others were affiliated with one another across regions by product and transport systems. The trans-regional circulation of goods was dependent upon such networks. Two such groups that functioned as links between cities and regions add geographical breadth to our picture of medieval commerce: the itinerating Ise and Kumano merchants, and the Ōyamazaki lamp oil merchants. The former traversed multiple provinces of central-east Japan, starting as transporters of goods from the shrines' far-flung estates and evolving into merchants dealing in a range of goods while enjoying the prestige and protection of two major shrines. The lamp oil merchants were an important success story in the trans-regional economy of western Japan from Kyoto to Kyushu.[18] Theirs was a winning combination: high-demand commodity, strategically located base on the approach to Kyoto from the Inland Sea, and shrine protection allowing them valuable exemptions on tolls and other taxes. In the thirteenth century they moved beyond their base near Kyoto and spread across the Inland Sea, pulling merchants from other locales into their organization. The experience of these two networks of medieval merchants shows how medieval commerce functioned not only locally but trans-regionally and with great consistency over a long period of time.

As these studies of towns, roads, and merchant groups demonstrate, however, one challenge of medieval history remains from a half century ago: grasping the big picture. Scholars necessarily study particular areas or groups and their conclusions reflect that particularity. It is the rare historian indeed who can synthesize the massive, detailed evidence from multiple excavations with textual sources into a comprehensive picture of medieval commerce and towns.

The ambiguous periphery: border zones and commerce

As part of "thinking medievally," we now move far from Kyoto to focus on communities on the periphery as essential to an understanding of medieval commerce and towns. Particularly fruitful is to challenge Kyoto-centric thinking by considering border areas or zones on the edges of Japan as vital centers of commerce and other human activity. Peripheral communities typically comprised both sides of a border—a liminal zone, in other words, sometimes vast in scope, sometimes on land, sometimes even encompassing the seas as well, whose residents used the entire area as their sphere of activity, irrespective of national identity.[19] Names redolent of peripherality can be found in such areas: Sotogahama (outer shore), Genkaijima (dark realm island), and Kikaigashima (Kikaijima today, demon realm island), for example. As will be shown, labeling these as remote, nether regions reflected primarily the insularity of the center toward places that were in fact vibrant with the activities of a diverse population.

Among its many subplots, *The Tale of the Heike* contains the story of the priest Shunkan, aide to retired emperor Go-Shirakawa, exiled to Kikaigashima in 1177 for plotting with two others to overthrow Taira no Kiyomori. His co-conspirators were granted an amnesty two years later, but he was left on the island, described as utterly desolate, where he starved himself to death. That's the story as *Tale of the Heike* gives it to us: a tragic ending in a forsaken, isolated setting.[20]

Reading the *Heike* historically and supplementing it with other sources give a fuller picture of life on the island.[21] These indicate that the people there were strange to Shunkan, perhaps simply meaning unlike people in the capital. But the character *ki* in the island's name means demon, a sub-human characterization, suggesting possibly that the inhabitants included Japanese and non-Japanese. A former servant of Shunkan who visits from the capital finds the speech of the locals unintelligible, furthermore, which could mean that they are either non-Japanese or simply beyond the pale of the Kyoto world.[22] We find references to minerals on the island that were mined and sold, the same that would later figure in the island's trade with Ming China. From this we can assume that merchants were active there, even in the late twelfth century. The fact that one of Shunkan's co-conspirators was able to arrange for supplies to be delivered from a family holding in mainland Kyushu also suggests a less than isolated exile.

Kikaigashima is a prime example of an ambiguous, lively border zone. Off the coast of southern Kyushu in the string of islands leading to the Ryukyus, it was known on mainland Japan in premodern times as a place of exile. By approaching it instead as a thriving border zone, we can re-characterize it more accurately as a commercial hotbed.

While the Kyoto cognoscenti saw it as beyond the land of Japan, various Kyushu warriors valued it enough to stake claims to it.[23] The Shimazu military governor was ultimately successful, its hereditary manager (*daikan*) rights re-confirmed by the Ashikaga shogunate in the early Muromachi period. On the other hand, a fifteenth-century map records Kikaigashima as belonging to the Ryukyu kingdom. In 1450, moreover, two Korean officials recorded that half the island belonged to the Shimazu and half to the Ryukyus. With the unification of the Ryukyus in the late medieval period, Kikaigashima was claimed by that kingdom but the Satsuma domain continued to assert its claims as well. For most of the medieval period, then, Satsuma and the Ryukyus both claimed Kikaigashima, which meant that neither fully controlled it. Thus the island enjoyed a certain ambiguous status, carrying on prosperous trade with both sides. Kikaigashima is an example of a medieval border zone inhabited by various types of people who traded with both Japan and the outside world—in this case, the Ryukyus.

Less remote than Kikaigashima but another example of a border zone in medieval times was the island of Tsushima, between Kyushu and Korea.[24] Controlled by the Sō family from early medieval times except for a period of conquest by the Mongols in 1274, the island was a nexus

for trade. Its residents included true border zone people, who resist facile labeling as either Japanese or Korean. In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, moreover, Tsushima was a haven for raiders who plagued the Korean coast, kidnapping people and selling them into servitude in Kyushu and the Ryukyus. Two Tsushima inhabitants involved in the resolution of these activities had the linguistic and cultural fluency necessary to represent all sides across the border zone between Korea, Kyushu, and the Ryukyus.

In 1407 Hei Dōzen, a native of Tsushima, visited the Korean court as envoy of the Tsushima military governor, Sō Sadashige, in order to return hostages kidnapped by Tsushima-based marauders from Korean coastal areas.[25] He also conveyed from Sadashige a request to be allowed to move onto and garrison troops at Ulleungdo (Utsuryō Island, in Japanese), north of Tsushima and just off the Korean coast. The request was rebuffed but Dōzen himself was granted permission to live in Korea where the court bestowed on him an official appointment. Thus he served both the Sō and the Korean king in a diplomatic capacity. In 1411 he was sent to Tsushima as envoy of the Korean king, requesting harmonious relations and a stop to incursions. Persistent marauding also took Dōzen as far afield as the Ryukyus. In 1416 the Korean government deputized him to negotiate the return of Korean hostages kidnapped by Japanese marauders and then sold in the Ryukyus.

Dōzen's activities extended beyond diplomacy. Records of a 1413 test near present-day Seoul comparing the speed of a Korean military ship to that of a Tsushima-based boat refer to the latter as built by Dōzen. And in 1415 he led a group of Buddhist priests from Japan where they performed supplication rituals for rain in western Korea. The first activity seems to indicate military tension between Tsushima and Korea, with Dōzen's shipbuilding skills possibly pivotal. The second activity suggests cultural affinity between Japan and Korea, at the very least.

Dōzen's propensity to play both sides of the border zone caught up with him in 1419, when he participated in a Korean military invasion of Tsushima, the marauders' longtime haven. Accused by Korean authorities of misconduct during the invasion, Dōzen and his wife and children were seized and taken to Pyongyang where they were imprisoned. From the invasion itself it appears that Korea, now under King Sejong's rule, could challenge more effectively this border zone's ambivalence.

Another Tsushima border player was Kim Woncin.[26] He first appears in Korean court records in 1419 as an envoy of the Hirado lord, in Kyushu. Several years later he asked the Korean authorities to allow him to travel through southern Kyushu to search for Korean hostages. His request was granted and he was dispatched to provinces ruled by Shimazu Hisatoyo, carrying diplomatic papers designating him as originally from Korea but having been in service to the Hirado lord. Thus we can label him as ethnically Korean yet his name comes up in another Korean source of 1423 as a "*waein*" (Jpn: "*wajin*"), a term usually understood to indicate a Japanese, but here a broader category including anyone serving as envoy of authorities in Tsushima or northern Kyushu. In later years Kim continued to work in negotiations among Korea, Hirado, and the Ryukyus for return of hostages and to otherwise facilitate the movement of people across this border zone.

The city of Hakata in northwestern Kyushu has been characterized as part of Japan yet of a fundamentally different character; labels attached to it include "international," "representing Japan to East Asia," or "the face of Japan" to the outside.[27] These apply equally well to the classical and medieval city as to modern Hakata. A city of commerce and trade, its population included Chinese and Korean merchants who preserved their ethnic identity whether transient or permanent residents. In commerce medieval Hakata typifies a border zone particularly well, a city whose trade with the continent was part of its character from earliest times and whose residents, regardless of origin, participated in that trade.

Classical and medieval Hakata was the largest base in Japan for overseas Chinese merchants to put down residential roots for the purpose of trade. The archeological evidence for this is twofold. Pottery bearing marks of certain Chinese trade organizations far outnumber any other that has been unearthed in Hakata. The other evidence is remote: stones unearthed in China's coastal city of Ningbo dated 1167 bear inscriptions of contributions of ten *kanmon* each to a local temple walkway by three Chinese merchants, two living in Hakata and the other intending to live there temporarily. This proves that both long- and short-term living patterns could be found among Chinese merchants in Hakata. Textual evidence of Chinese residents includes an 1116 inscription in a sutra collection by a Tendai monk who had traveled to China: he describes a Hakata neighborhood where Chinese merchants and boat captains lived.[28] These are a few of the late Heian period textual references to Chinese people in Hakata and the foreignness of the city.

Massive finds of pottery suggest that many Chinese merchants were concentrated in their own community in medieval Hakata, located between today's train station and the port. Early medieval textual evidence corroborates this: some of them intermarried with Japanese residents, and some were interred after death in a local Zen temple.[29] A Chinese resident named in a 1252 dispute over non-payment of a shrine tax is referenced with a term (*Hakata gōshu*) that identifies him as a boat captain from China living in Hakata.[30] He held constabulary (*jitō*) rights to a small island whose overlord was Munakata Shrine, suggesting how deeply members of this community could be assimilated into the local power structure. Nor were all non-Japanese residents only from China: there is also a 1412 reference to a delegation from Java in the city and Hakata archeological digs have yielded pottery from Vietnam and Thailand as well.[31] Hakata's essential medieval character as a multi-ethnic border zone of commerce was reflected in the variety of its residents who acted as agents of trade with the outside world.

Natural disasters and history

Natural occurrences shaped the urban and commercial scene as did human activities. Historians have long appreciated the effects of disease and epidemics on the human population, as well as harsh weather causing crop failure and famine. Particularly since the Hanshin earthquake of 1995, there has been a greater awareness of the role played by natural disasters in shaping history. For example, archeological evidence suggests that fires following earthquakes devastated most of Kamakura city at one time or another during the medieval period, while geological analysis of earth samples near the port of Kamakura indicates that liquefaction occurred, including possibly in the merchant sector.[32]

Medieval trade routes could even be altered by natural disasters. In 1498, for example, a huge earthquake generated a tsunami that damaged a broad swathe of the Pacific coast from Ise to the Bōsō Peninsula (present-day Chiba).[33] Anotsu in Ise and Asaba in Tōtōmi province were among the region's ports completely destroyed, forcing survivors to move and obliterating segments of the combined sea and land trade route that ultimately linked Kyoto to that entire coastal region. Pottery and roof tiles made at the Seigaya kilns in present-day Shizuoka were indirect casualties of the disaster: transported before 1498 in short steps by boat and on land to the Tōkaidō main route and beyond, their production dropped precipitously when the tsunami destroyed links in the trade route. In an economy as developed as late medieval Japan's, trade was a multi-stage process comprising production of goods, transport to an entrepot for sorting, and then shipment to markets for retail sale.[34] Small ports like Anotsu and Asaba served a transshipment function, in effect, for goods eventually bound for markets. It is the archeological rather than textual record that narrates this natural blow to medieval trade and commerce.

Weighing the value of historical developments: commerce and the urban

Determining the topics and developments favored by historians in any age is akin to fixing on a moving target, but a survey of current Japanese scholarship suggests at least that cities and commerce are now regarded as significant to an understanding of medieval Japan. Monographs and journal articles as well as essays in thematically or chronologically organized collections contain regular offerings in these subfields.[35] One convenient benchmark for gauging the importance of commerce and towns in current historiography is the most recent edition of Iwanami's multivolume collection of scholarly essays on broad topics in Japanese history.[36] Urban and commercial history are each allotted one dedicated article, but also figure in essays on status and debt amnesties.[37] Insofar as cities and trade were relevant to policy, they appear in some of the political history essays as well. In addition, a useful article on communications and regionalism presents the late Heian and early Kamakura foundation for later trade routes.[38] All things considered, this is a healthy, if not heavy, representation of commercial and urban history.

In his article on the medieval city, Takahashi Shin'ichirō tightly links cities to commerce in the medieval period.[39] He posits that the most essential character of medieval cities, regardless of size or location, was trade: the exchange of goods, buying and selling.[40] He proposes that medieval cities were primarily nuclei of their local economic zones, but also linked to other cities through trade networks creating larger, regional economic zones. Kyoto, for instance, was the center of the capital economic zone, linked to other cities like Sakai, Hyōgo, and Ōtsu. Meanwhile, maritime trade created regional economic zones such as the Inland Sea, with trade occurring between cities, as beads on a string.

Takahashi credits archeology with shedding light on the shape and operations of these smaller entities both individually and in networks. Finally, he ventures that cityscape is one other aspect of medieval cities deserving consideration. This includes architecture, such as *machiya* residences and shops, street layout, and street life such as buying and selling, movement of people and animals, etc. Sources like illustrated screens as well as the archeological record are essential to this reconstruction of a lost scene. In identifying commerce as central to the identity of all medieval cities, Takahashi's essay builds upon several decades of scholars' interdisciplinary research, including archeology and regional history.

Chieda Daishi's essay on late medieval circulation of goods and currency relies on prior scholarly work proving a high level of commercial activity throughout medieval Japan.[41] By the fifteenth century, the country was comprised of multiple trade zones, and markets and itinerating merchants had proliferated, supported by landed and maritime transport routes. Chieda posits that the Kyoto-centric economic zone continued to function and even expanded in the post-Ōnin period as rulers and would-be rulers situated themselves in the capital city. Nor does he neglect regional economic zones, focusing on Ise province, where, by the sixteenth century, merchant guilds had specialized into those operating locally and those carrying goods to outside areas. He then moves beyond discrete zones, describing near-national circulation and consumption of specialized local goods in the late medieval period, predicated on the durability of trade routes in a period of some instability. He explicates at length the regional nature of "trust arrangements" whereby goods could be circulated nationally through the widespread use of such devices as bills of exchange.[42] In a word, he leaves no doubt that in commerce and trade across regions, late medieval Japan had moved beyond subsistence to the sophistication of an integrated market system.

Commerce and towns, whether treated separately or together, constitute rich if not dominant subfields of medieval history in Japan today. Kyoto-centrism is a thing of the past as regional trade zones are clarified; the ubiquity of urban sites across the land is well documented; the

intrinsic link between towns and commerce, both locally and across regions, is now fully recognized; and the merchants' ability to supply the population with specialized and foreign products is now understood. Also significant is the recognition that the subfields of cities and commerce help explicate other topics: medieval social statuses cannot be fully grasped without reference to Kyoto's outcasts nor can medieval Kyoto as home to small-scale moneylenders be ignored in a study of peasant uprisings. Finally, there is no longer justification for portrayal of the medieval economy as a subsistence arrangement.

Why have the urban and the commercial gained a permanent place in medieval history? Perhaps it is the tangible nature of these topics in a discipline that often grapples with abstract systems of thought and governance. Perhaps it is that they provide a lens for understanding how people lived and met their quotidian needs in a time that produced few written sources pertaining to such matters. Perhaps it is that they show us a distant mirror of ourselves and our values, including even materialism, in a harsh and difficult time. Or perhaps it is simply that they epitomize normalcy amid much instability. Commerce and towns were constants in an age of volatility.

Notes

1 Farris makes this case in the areas of agriculture, commerce, and fertility in Chapter 4 of *Japan's Medieval Population: Famine, Fertility, and Warfare in a Transformative Age*, 128–163.
2 Wakita Haruko with Susan Hanley, "Dimensions of Development: Cities in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Japan," 295–326, describes the development of medieval urban studies in Japan through the 1970s.
3 Kuroda Toshio, *Shōensei shakai*. 191–193.
4 Amino Yoshihiko, "Chūsei toshiron." 263–266.
5 Kozo Yamamura, "The Growth of Commerce in Medieval Japan," 344–395.
6 Farris, *Japan to 1600: A Social and Economic History*, 129–163.
7 Suzanne Gay, "The Lamp-Oil Merchants of Iwashimizu Shrine: Transregional Trade in Medieval Japan," 1–51.
8 Ethan Isaac Segal, *Coins, Trade, and the State: Economic Growth in Early Medieval Japan*.
9 Peter D. Shapinsky, *Lords of the Sea: Pirates, Violence, and Commerce in Late Medieval Japan*.
10 The following account of the late twentieth-century evolution of local history in tandem with advances in archeology draws primarily from Niki Hiroshi, "Chiikishi kenkyū no kanōsei," 45–65.
11 Niki, "Chiikishi kenkyū no kanōsei," 46–47.
12 Fujiwara Yoshiaki, *Chūsei no michi to toshi*.
13 Fujiwara, *Chūsei no michi to toshi*, 100–101.
14 Fujiwara, *Chūsei no michi to toshi*, 102–103.
15 Information on archeology and Kamakura's history is derived from Fujiwara, *Chūsei no michi to toshi*, 77–99, and Ishii Susumu and Ōmiwa Tatsuhiko, *Bushi no toshi Kamakura*.
16 Kamakura's archeological excavations have yielded almost no warrior implements like weapons and armor, a puzzling lacuna in this city of warriors. This has been explained by the fact that most objects unearthed in archeological digs are discarded items like broken dishes, worn tools, bones, shells, etc., whereas warriors did not discard their implements. Ishii and Ōmiwa, *Bushi no toshi Kamakura*, 222.
17 See Fujiwara, *Chūsei no michi to toshi*, 79–86, for accounts of military campaigns traced along these roads. In the early Kamakura period, the coastal Inaba road to the southwest was the land route out of Kamakura toward Kyoto.
18 These merchants have been studied extensively by Japanese historians for decades; see Sakurai Eiji, *Nihon chūsei no keizai kōzō*, 360, comparing their wide network of operations to those of the Kumano and Ise merchants. In English see Gay, "The Lamp-Oil Merchants."
19 Murai Shōsuke lays out this concept most succinctly in *Kyōkai wo matagu hito bito* as, "peoples straddling border areas." This concept might be applied to the way many residents of San Diego-Tijuana actually live and work in that zone, *if* the border existed without the official control apparatus of both nations.
20 Kitagawa Hiroshi and Bruce T. Tsuchida, *The Tale of the Heike*, 53–54, 90–91, 127, 142–145, 159–160, 162–164. 166, 179, 185–191.

21 Murai, *Kyōkai wo matagu hito bito*, 65–67.
22 Kitagawa and Tsuchida, 186.
23 Competing and shifting warrior claims to the island in medieval times are described in Murai, *Kyōkai wo matagu hito bito*, 72–82.
24 On Tsushima as border region between Japan and Korea, see Murai, *Kyōkai wo matagu hito bito*, 56–61. Tsushima also qualifies as a border zone today: Korean tourists to the island mingle with members of Japan's Self-Defense Forces stationed there. Although officially recognized by South Korea as part of Japan, Tsushima has been claimed by some Korean nationalists as Korean territory. The 2012 theft by Koreans of two Buddhist statues from a temple on the island has raised tensions: although recovered by Korean authorities, the statues, made in Korea in the thirteenth century, have not been returned to Japan. Thus is ambiguity based on cultural claims injected into a situation that modern nation-states officially consider to be unambiguously settled.
25 Murai, *Kyōkai wo matagu hito bito*, 56–58.
26 Murai, *Kyōkai wo matagu hito bito*, 58–61.
27 On classical and medieval Hakata, see Murai, *Kyōkai wo matagu hito bito*, 39–62 for textual and archeological evidence; especially in regard to archeological evidence see Yata Toshifumi, *Jishin to chūsei no ryūtsū*, 86–89; and Kawazoe Shōichi, *Higashi Ajia no kokusai toshi Hakata*. On trade with other Asian countries, see "Hakata."
28 Murai, *Kyōkai wo matagu hito bito*, 45.
29 Murai, *Kyōkai wo matagu hito bito*, 53.
30 On this case, see Murai, *Kyōkai wo matagu hito bito*, 51–63. On Chinese boat captains in Hakata see Hayashi Fuminori, "Hakata gōshu no rekishiteki ichi," 575–591.
31 "Hakata."
32 Ishii and Ōmiwa, *Bushi no toshi Kamakura*, 196–198.
33 Yata, *Jishin to chūsei no ryūtsū*, 90–94. The 1498 earthquake is rated at magnitude 8.2–8.4.
34 Yata, *Jishin to chūsei no ryūtsū*, 106.
35 Numerous essay collections have been published on medieval commerce and cities. See, for example, in the *Shintaikei Nihonshi* series, Yoshida Nobuyuki and Satō Makoto, *Toshi shakaishi*, v. 6, and Sakurai Eiji and Nakanishi Satoru, *Ryūtsū keizaishi*, v. 12.
36 Ōtsu Tōru et al., *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi* includes three volumes on medieval history. They contain twenty-six articles, most written by mid-career scholars. A new version of this collection has appeared every fifteen to twenty years, starting in the early 1960s. Political history remains dominant as ever, claiming about 40 percent of the medieval essays in the current series, while institutional history is represented in essays on judicial processes and the estate system. (Several of the political essays take into account events in China, continuing a tendency to provide an East Asian context for medieval Japan that started in late 1970s.) Cultural history is minimally represented with two articles; intellectual history gets only one. Buddhism is presented twice, first in its Kamakura period manifestations, and next in its relations, at many levels, with the Muromachi shogunate. Social history fares better, including articles on peasants, peasant uprisings and debt amnesties, women and the family, and status and social groups.
37 On cities and commerce, see Takahashi Shin'ichirō, "Chūsei toshiron" and Chieda Daishi, "Chūsei kōki no kahei to ryūtsū." On status, see Mieda Akiko, "Chūsei no mibun to shakai shūdan," 181–216. On debt amnesties, see Hayashima Daisuke, "Ikki to tokusei," 153–186.
38 Yanagihara Toshiaki, "Chūsei no kōtsū to chiikisei," 113–145. Yanagihara highlights the far north (Hiraizumi) and south (the Taira of Satsuma), setting a good scholarly example for eschewing the center.
39 Takahashi, "Chūsei toshiron," 253–283.
40 Characterizing medieval cities as merely transitional and ancillary in nature, Yoshida Nobuyuki has noted the lack of a single medieval city type, in contrast to classical and early modern urban forms. See Yoshida and Satō, "Jo," *Toshi shakaishi*, iii–iv. Takahashi responds with his theory of medieval cities as sites of trade; see "Chūsei toshiron," 258.
41 Chieda, "Chūsei kōki no kahei to ryūtsū," 187–223.
42 Chieda's "Chūsei kōki no kahei to ryūtsū," on the latter half of the medieval period, pairs well with Segal's *Coins, Trade, and the State*, which emphasizes the earlier portion of the period.

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